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also have spatial expression. Vaguer local groups, bands, or phratries group together certain clans within one moiety.

The tribe is almost a non-existent unit among these people. Its most explicit element is a dialectic unity, but even here the linguistic variation within small local groups is very highly developed. The organized tribe with the use of chiefs does not exist. The tribe is not the war-making group nor does it enforce law.

It has long been the theory of a great number of anthropological authorities that magic is an individual phenomenon, whereas religion is a social phenomenon. The Durkheim or French school of sociology has been in agreement with this general point of view, although its members differed radically from the American, English, and German schools in their interpretation of religion. Although I am in general agreement with the social interpretation of religion by Durkheim, I cannot follow him or his school in his separation of magic from religion. It is another thesis of this book that magic is also as much a "church" in the Durkheim sense as religion. A test situation is available in this region because, although the peoples of the northern area believe in magic, they have no magicians such as are found in the south. Their substitution of ordinary religious rituals reveals much about the nature of magic.

The social mechanisms which are placed in operation within the group by the spread of the knowledge that a black magician has stolen a man's soul, that is, successfully operated on a man, are presented and analyzed in the chapter on magic. When magic is believed to be functioning, all the members of the society act in a manner exactly opposite to the ordinary in their relations with the unfortunate victim. This means that instead of helping to sustain the individual and allowing him to function as a normal person, these protective devices are withdrawn and the attitude is taken that the man is "half dead" and will shortly die. The effect upon the suggestive individual, it is contended in this book, is sufficient to set up certain psycho-physiological reactions which tend to destroy him. When this individual becomes very ill, the movement of social withdrawal from him ceases, and pressure is then applied through mortuary rites which perform the function of attempting to remove him from the society of the living to that of the dead, further destroying his desire to live and frequently bringing about his ultimate death.

The sacred world of the Murngin is totemically conceived; each individual by virtue of his clan membership possesses and belongs to

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602 553 shall be given, which means that the father chooses the names from his marelker.

602 Kutara and mari always come to each other's assistance in times of danger. When a camp quarrel is being aired kutara invariably stands at mari's side. If one of them is killed the other will aid the avenging party. A black magician's tales of his killings speak of a mari who had lost his kutara in a spear fight and had come to the magician for aid to buy back his kutara's life. The sorcerer slew the kutara's killer by magic, and the mari paid for it with many handsome gifts.

[154] [431] Presents are always being exchanged between kutara and mari. When ranga string is being given away after some of the big ceremonies, mari and kutara are always prominent in the exchanges.

715 When kutara dies mari's spirit always comes for him, along with marikmo's. If the deceased was a young man, the dead mari's spirit condemns his relatives for not giving the child better treatment and for not preventing his death. They always explain to his mari's spirit that they have done all they could to keep him alive. Mari helps marikmo's spirit take the dead soul back to its totemic water hole and helps protect it against the evil ghosts who try to steal kutara's soul. So, in death as in life, mari is kutara's protector and guide. In [852] the Djungguan circumcision ceremony mari's totemic name is always called out by his kutara, as is marikmo's, and it is believed that the spirit of mari appears at that time, although it is not seen.

602 [867] Mari is usually the person who really teaches kutara his manners. Mari is powerful not only because of his direct relationship with kutara, but also indirectly, for he is father of mokul (mother-in-law) and marelker (mokul's brother); he is marelker to kutara's bapa, and wawa or yukiyuko to mari mielk, who is mother to kutara's gawel.

602 606 The fact that mari is father to kutara's mokul, the woman with the strongest taboos around her and one who is very important to kutara, gives kutara a strength he would not otherwise possess. He can force mokul to give her daughter to him if the mokul is unfair about it, since mari can put pressure not only on her but on her husband, who is gawel to kutara. Mari occupies, because of this relationship with kutara's gawel and mokul, one of the most powerful positions. A man's whole position, security and well-being demand that he have a number of wives and children; he must look to gawel and mokul for the fruition of his wishes; if his mari and he are on good terms, which nearly always holds true, his mari will force these two to help him. In other words, the relatives with whom ego is weakest are those with

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CHAPTER VII

MURNGIN MAGIC AND MEDICINE

DESCRIPTION OF MURNGIN MAGIC, WITH DETAILED DATA

A. Introduction

Among all the clans of the eight tribes and all the members of the groups there is a profound belief in magic. The effects of its power are twofold: it can harm and destroy, or it can benefit and cure. Among the northern clans of the Murngin and Yaernungo tribes there is a belief in magic but there are no magicians of any kind, while among the southern and more western tribes magicians, both evil and good, are found everywhere. The "black" magician (sorcerer) can injure or kill his victim, and the "white" magician can cure him or restore his lost faculties. All deaths, sicknesses, certain types of bad luck, and, in general, all those occasions on which the individual is seriously out of adjustment with his community, physically, mentally, or socially, are looked upon as the effects of black magic; and in almost every case except that of soul-stealing the white magician is called in to remedy the situation.[1] There is here a kind of warfare between the forces which do good and those which do harm to man. The latter are related to an organized set of concrete techniques embodied in the person of the black magician, while an entirely different set gives practical expression, in the personality of the white magician, to those forces which control the effects of black magic. The struggle then becomes a warfare between these two types of magical personalities. This does not mean that they are necessarily enemies, though they usually are; furthermore, a black magician is not looked upon by all men as fearsome: to those of his own group he is a constant source of strength, since they seek his aid in repaying a wrong done to them by another group.

Occasionally when a very old person dies the diagnosis is, "It was nothing, just old age"; but this is very rare. Among some of the magical causes are: the machinations of an evil magician; possession by an

[1] Whenever a magician, black or white, is called upon, payment must be made to him.

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[76] 754 evil ghost (mokoi); and ritual uncleanliness. Their effects can be cured by: ritual; white magic; and very occasionally, natural remedies. We shall first describe black magic and the sorcerer, then white magic and the healer, and finally analyze these concrete data in order to determine the nature of Murngin magic. To do this we shall first examine the internal evidence presented by the activities of the black and white magicians in the southern areas in the hope that we shall thus illuminate our understanding of the functions of magic. We shall next consider the northern area, which is without magicians, comparing it with the southern area to ascertain if this test situation throws any light upon the nature of magic and its possible relation to ritual and religion. After this we shall apply our findings to the theories held by Hubert, Mauss, and Durkheim,[2] particularly to their theory that magic is an individualistic technique without a church, therefore different from and antithetical to religion, the fundamental basis of which is its church organization. The last section of the chapter will present a sociological interpretation of black and white magic which will take account of all the Murngin magical data, demonstrating that magic is a part of religion and, like it, has its church.

B. Black Magic and the Sorcerer

The Murngin believe in a number of methods by which sorcerers can kill their victims. One of the more popular ideas is that the magician goes secretly into the bush and makes a long turtle rope, brings it near the camp, and hides it in preparation for the magical slaying of a tribesman. In the middle of the night or early morning he and an accomplice approach the camp where the one they intend to kill is asleep. They crawl up near him. One takes the rope, makes a loop in it, and slides it over the victim's head, lying down beside him so as not to be observed by anyone who might be awake; or, if the victim should waken, to make him believe the magician is one of the victim's wives. If all goes well, he pushes the rope around the sleeping man's neck. Meanwhile, the accomplice holds the opposite end of the rope some few paces away from the main camp. He has been told before that as soon as a pull is given on the rope, the cord will have been properly adjusted. The helper starts twisting the rope while the other sneaks to him. He continues to twist it until he starts

[2] Durkheim, Émile, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (trans., J. W. Swain), The Macmillan Company, New York, 1926; Hubert and Mauss, "Théorie Générale de la Magie," *Année Sociologique*, Paris, Vol. VII.

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choking the sleeper. The two then pull the struggling man toward them, pick him up and carry him to a safe place in the jungle. The one who had crawled into the camp returns and lies beside the man's wives, with whom he is supposed to copulate in the perfect killing.

The other magician, meanwhile, opens the left side of the man, who is now presumed to be in a dead faint, slits the skin between two ribs, somewhat below the heart, and pulls the two ribs back. He covers his arm and hand with orchid juice[a] and places a small sharpened hardwood stick in his palm with the sharpened end in his fingers. The victim is breathing heavily; when he inhales the magician pushes his hand upward between the ribs, when he exhales the magician holds his hand. When the sorcerer reaches the heart he thrusts the killing stick into it and withdraws his hand from the body.

The victim's body is now held so that the trunk is leaning down, and the blood is allowed to run into a paper-bark receptacle or a waterproof basket. When the heart stops beating the soul is let out; in native thinking the heart's blood is different from the body's blood, the home of the soul being in the heart. The basket of blood is hidden some distance away. The magician returns, puts the ribs in place, and smooths the flesh upon them. He builds a small fire, heats his spear-thrower in it, and rubs it against the wound. Previous to the killing he has gathered a nest of green ants and a small lizard, which are mashed together. The juice is taken from them and rubbed on the wound. The heating and rubbing continue until the opening is completely closed and all traces of the wound are gone.

The magician turns the body on its face. The large intestine protrudes several feet because of the magical death. A few green ants are shaken on the cut. They bite the flesh and the intestine retreats within the hole much like a snake.

The spear-thrower is then dipped in the heart's blood and whirled around the victim's head. The body quivers. The weapon is once more dipped into the heart's blood and waved again. He breathes heavily. The operation is repeated several times until the man who lost his soul sits up and looks very much as before the magical "killing."

The operator now hits him on the head and tells him he will not remember what has happened to him. He is ordered to open his mouth

[a] An orchid bulb, green ants, and sometimes a lizard are collected preparatory to a killing. The juice of the bulb is rubbed on the operating arm. The green ants and lizard are used to bite the intestine to make it withdraw or to bite a wound and cause it to close; sometimes ointments for the same purposes are made of the ants and of the lizard.

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754 and the magician twists his tongue so that the top of it lies on the bottom of the mouth and the reverse side faces the palate. He is told that in three days—but there is no particular set time or magical number—he will die: "The first day you will be very happy, the next day you will be sick, and the third day you will die." After he leaves the spot where the operation has taken place, the magician runs ahead, hides, and waits for him, hits him with a club and cuts his body in two. One part of the body flies in the air in one direction and the other in the opposite. They become like leaves in the wind and disappear.[4] Several hundred feet away they reappear and the body becomes whole again. This process is repeated a number of times until the victim is near his camp, to which he returns. The magician sneaks away in the bush and returns to his own camp.

The man who has lost his soul feels very weak. His wives ask if he has had his soul stolen, and he says, "Oh, no, I have had dysentery, and I am very sick from it." The first day he feels very well, finds an abundance of food and seems very cheerful; the second day he sickens, and the third day he dies. A "white" magician is then called by the 756 relatives to ascertain who has been responsible. He looks at the dead 781 man to see what spirits are standing beside him, for the spirits of the killers are nearly always to be found by their victim's corpse, though only medicine men can see them. The doctor then announces the name of the killer and the relatives discuss the best way of avenging the death.

754 When a woman is killed the operation is considerably different. The rope is placed around her neck, she is dragged from the camp to a hiding place in the jungle, a fire is built, a paper-bark or basket receptacle is made ready, and green ants, a lizard and an orchid bulb are collected; but instead of making an incision below the heart the magician enters the body of the woman through her vagina. In operating on a man the magician faces his victim in a squatting position, but in opening a woman he works from the side with his legs pressed together for fear sexual desire will overcome his magic.

He has the killing stick in his palm. The skin around the Mount of Venus is pushed back until it reaches the navel. The magician inserts his hand in the vaginal orifice, goes forward when the woman inhales and keeps his hand quiet when she exhales. The woman is kept in a

[4] The word "warro" means leaf, also house, as well as the soul. The warro (soul) makes a malli or shade. A leaf does the same thing. This is possibly the association of ideas which gives the two the same name. Houses are shelters and are made of leaves.

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squatting position with her buttocks on her heels. The basket or bark receptacle has been placed under her vagina and the blood is allowed to flow into the basket. Sometimes a large blue fly is put inside her and allowed to come out her mouth; it flies off with her soul, which becomes the creature and familiar of the magician. After the heart has been punctured and the soul released, the same process of alternating the hot spear-thrower and the green ant and lizard ointment is followed, and the hole in the uterus and the outer wound are closed.

The large intestine protrudes. She is turned over on her face to be given the same treatment as in the case of the man. When it has disappeared the spear-thrower once more is dipped in blood and whirled around the head, the same procedure being followed as with the man, until the female victim has recovered her senses and is told when she will die and that she will not be able to tell anyone what has happened to her. He cuts her in two a number of times on her way back to camp. She lives her allotted number of days and then, on the day set, she dies.

Other times the sorcerer sneaks up on a man while he is asleep and bites his nasal bone. This closes the nose and makes the man open his mouth. He takes a deep breath of air, which opens his heart, where everybody's life is. His soul comes out with the breath and goes down the doctor's mouth. He swallows it. The magician, with the aid of his helpers, then takes the man out into the bush and finishes the magical treatment ordinarily associated with soul-stealing.

Individuality and Social Personality of the Sorcerer

Individually the sorcerer is not different from the ordinary man in the community. He participates in the culture and in the daily round of affairs exactly like other men.

His difference from the average man lies in his having a special power. There were a large number of these soul-stealers in the southern and western parts of the Murngin country. Among them was Dulperro, who was credited with killing seven men and one woman; a number of expeditions had been sent out to spear him, but they had not killed him, although one succeeded in wounding him badly. Laindjura, from Marunga Island, was another outstanding killer; several of his case histories will be presented later. Goonga, of the Burera, was also a famous killer with sinister reputation. All of these men were taught by their fathers or maternal uncles how "to kill a man and make him alive to die." The black magician always gains his

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754 868 power originally from a near relative, usually his father, often his maternal uncle, but at times his paternal uncle. The father takes his son and says to him, "You do this way and that way, and by and by, after I die, you can do this too." Although there is a tendency for the son to obtain his magical power almost by right from his father, the novice must associate with the older sorcerer in a killing or two before he can secure sufficient mana in his group to be considered a sorcerer. First, the power is transmitted from a man who is a killer and master of the souls of several dead men; and, second, the beginner must have been associated with the killing of a man and therefore with the dead before he is given the social personality of a sorcerer by his community. In brief, his personality as a sorcerer is by double association with the power of the dead. He has the power to change the living into the dead before his sacred power comes from the sacred dead.

Case Histories of the Sorcerer Laindjura

754 One of the most noted killers in the southeastern Murngin country was Laindjura, who had destroyed many victims by black magic. As an individual he was not very different from the ordinary man in the tribe, although possibly a bit more alert. He was a good hunter as well as an excellent wood carver, and had several wives and a number of children. There was nothing sinister, peculiar, or psychopathic about him; he was perfectly normal in all of his behavior. Among his own people the attitudes were no different toward him than toward any other man in the clan. It was extremely difficult, however, to obtain Laindjura's confidence to the point where he would talk about his activities as a sorcerer. Although he and I were on very friendly terms, it was not until my second field trip into the area that he gave me long accounts of his various killings.

It is impossible definitely to evaluate how far Laindjura and other killers believed the case histories which they gave me. There was no doubt in my own thinking that Laindjura believed a great part of them. Since he was constantly credited and blamed by friends and enemies for certain deaths, he may at first have taken an attitude "as if" he had done these things and ultimately have come to believe that he had actually performed the operations he claimed he had. A black sorcerer who is credited with many killings has a rather difficult time among the people surrounding his own group, and under most circumstances it is more difficult and unpleasant to be so classed than as an ordinary man; hence a man would not practice such complete

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duplicity as these stories might indicate unless the setting were extraordinary from our point of view.

The Killing of Bom-li-tjir-i-li's wife.—"All of us were camping at Marunga Island. We were looking for oysters. This woman I was about to kill was hunting for lilies that day, for the other women had gone another way to search for oysters. I carried a hatchet with me and watched her. The woman gathered her lily bulbs, then left the swamp, went back on the sandy land and lay down in the shade. She covered herself with paper bark to keep warm because she had been in the lily pond and felt cold. Only her head came out from the bark. She could not see me.

"I sneaked up and hit her between the eyes with the head of a tomahawk. She kicked and tried to raise up but she couldn't. Her eyes turned up like she was dead. I picked her up under the arms and dragged her to a mangrove jungle and laid her down. She was a young girl.

"I split a mangrove stick from off a tree and sharpened it. I took some djel-kurk [orchid bulb] first and got it ready. I did not have my spear-thrower with me, so I took the handle off my tomahawk and jabbed about the skin on her Mount of Venus which was attached to her vagina and pushed it back. I pushed the skin up to her navel.

"Her large intestine protruded as though it were red calico. I covered my arm with orchid juice. I covered the killing stick with it, too. I put the stick in the palm of my hand so that I could push the point upward with my thumb. When she inhaled I pushed my arm in a little. When she exhaled I stopped. Little by little I got my hand inside her. Finally I touched her heart. I pushed the killing stick with my thumb up over the palm, which pressed the stick against my fingers, into her heart. She had a very large heart and I had to push harder than usual.

"I pulled the stick out. I stood back of her and held her up with her breasts in my hands. She was in a squatting position.

"Her heart's blood ran out into the paper-bark basket I had left to catch it in. It ran slower and slower and then stopped. I laid her down and took the blood away; I hid it. I came back and broke a nest of green ants off a tree. I laid it near her. I put the live ants on her skin. (See Wawilak myth, page 257.) I did not squeeze them, for I was in a hurry because I was afraid her relatives would come looking for her. The skin, when bitten by the ants, moved by itself downward from her navel and covered her bones over her Mount of Venus.

"I then took some dry mud from an old lily pond. I put my sweat on the mud and warmed it over the fire. I put it against her to heal the wound so that no trace would be left of what I had done. I was careful none of her pubic hair would be left inside her vagina so that it would be felt by her husband or seen by the women. I kept up the mud applications until the vagina looked as it did before. I put blood and sweat in the mud and

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757 warmed it and put it inside the uterus. I did this again, using the mud, sweat, and blood. I did this six or eight times. The inside now was like it was before.

"I turned her over. Her large intestine stuck out several feet. I shook some green ants on it. It went in some little way. I shook some more on, and a little receded. I shook some more, and all of it went in. Everything was all right now. There was no trace of the wound.

"I took the tomahawk handle which had her heart's blood on it. I whirled it around her head. Her head moved slowly. I whirled it again. She moved some more. The spirit that belonged to that dead woman went into my heart then. I felt it go in. I whirled the stick again and she gasped for breath. I jumped over her and straightened her toes and fingers. She blew some breath out of her mouth and was all right.

"It was noontime. I said to her, 'You go eat some lilies.' The woman got up and walked away. She went around another way. I said to that woman, 'You will live two days. One day you will be happy, the next day you will be sick.' The woman went to the place where I had found her. She went to sleep. I took her blood and went away. The other women came from where they had been gathering oysters. They were laughing and talking. They awakened the girl. She picked up her lily bulbs and went to the camp with the women.

"The next day she walked around and played, laughed, talked, and made fun and gathered a lot of oysters and lilies. She came back to camp that night. She brought the things she had gathered into camp. She lay down and died that night."

Mar-a-wa.—"I came to the Mission on the Crocodile Islands. They were making a Narra ceremony here. I killed Bonira's wife's brother (Marawa), a Burera man, while he was here.

"Marawa went out hunting palm nuts with his wife. She is the woman who is now Ilkara's wife. I followed them. They went to Balmal, on the other side of Millingimbi Island.

"Before this Marawa and I had fought on Marunga Island. He had hit me with a club that time. I was pretending to hunt for kangaroo. That is what I told the people in the camp. I went along through the bush until I heard Marawa breaking up palm fruit on a log with a small mallet. He was getting this food ready for the Narra ceremony. His wife had gone on for a long distance.

"When I saw this, I came out beside him and sat down. I asked him if anyone were there. 'Where are your women?' He said, 'They have gone to the boomerang well.' 'Are you going to camp with them?' 'No, I am going first and they are coming after me.'

"I started thinking, 'This fellow is a big man and I have no one to help me carry him.' The people had been cleaning palm-nut fruit there and

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left a lot of logs on which they had beaten the nuts. I got up and picked up a log. I said, 'Why don't you use this good one?' He said, 'No, this is all right.' He was sitting with his back to me. I hit him on the back of the neck [the base of the brain]. When I struck him he fell over and spewed. I thought, 'You are a big man all right, but you have fallen down now and you are not too big for me now.' I couldn't lift him, so I put my hands and arms under his body and dragged him. I put him in a cycad palm jungle.

"I laid him on his side and cut him open under his heart. I used a sharpened spear-thrower to open him, not a knife. I tore his flesh around to the center of his stomach, where his ribs ended. I bent back three ribs, one at a time. I rubbed my arm with orchid juice. I had an old gan-djur-ma [killing stick] with me. Sometimes I use the backbone of a kangaroo's lower leg or a sting-ray prong. As he inhaled I went in, and when he exhaled I stopped. I kept this up until I reached the heart. It is easy to do this on a man because I have to reach in only to the wrist, but on a woman one has to push the arm to the elbow. I pushed my right arm into him. I always use the right arm both on men and women [he made a point of this]. I pushed the stick with my thumb and fingers into his heart. I pulled it out, laid the body on its side, with the left side down so that the heart's blood would run into the hole I had made to receive it. When he breathed the blood ran faster than when he did not. I next filled a paper-bark basket with Marawu's blood. I covered up the hole which had the blood in it, but before doing this I took some of it and put it on a leaf. I took the paper-bark basket of blood and hid it. I came back and cleaned up the place. I warmed the spear-thrower until it was burning hot. I put it on the sore. The skin went in a little. I straightened the ribs. I warmed and straightened and warmed and straightened them. I next squeezed some ant juice on the hole. This stung him and he jumped. I kept this up until the hole was only a small thing. I burned it until it was closed and looked as it did before.

"I took some ants and shook them on his lower intestine. They bit him and it receded. I did this three times until it went back into his hole. It went like the sun in a rift of clouds. It went slow until it got to the edge, then dropped in quickly. I took some blood and put it on the spear-thrower and whirled the spear-thrower around his head several times. The body jerked. I whirled it again and he inhaled heavily. I pulled his eyelashes and fingers and toes. He awakened and looked around. He got up and sat down. He blew on his lips, making a noise like a drone pipe.

"I hit him on the head. I said, 'A Yandjinung man will hit you with a spear and kill you. There will be three of them that do this to you.' The man said nothing. I twisted his tongue upside down. I said to him then, 'You go down and get that food you were fixing and take it down to the camp.' He picked up his food and went to the main camp.

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154 "The man slept two nights. The third day he got up and went to the Burera country near Cape Stewart. Ilkara was here at the Mission. The wife of Marawa had been a sweetheart of Ilkara's before she had become Marawa's wife. Ilkara wanted her now. I followed Marawa from the Mission. Ilkara took three of his maris and one of his wakus. They didn't know I had killed Marawa with magic.

"They followed him and came up on his left side. One of them threw a spear. He raised his arm to knock it off but the spear went to the place where I had opened him. He was kneeling down when they sneaked up on him. He stood up when he was hit. He stood still. He did not try to run, he did not try to raise his spear-thrower to protect himself, he did nothing. He did not try to throw his spear, for when a man is killed by magic he can do nothing.

"Ilkara's mari hooked up his spear to his spear-thrower and threw it. Marawa did not move, but stood like a tree. He fell over and died. After he died another mari speared him in the back. Ilkara took Marawa's woman."

[578] *Ka-per-ar-a, Sister of Bomlitjirli and Wife of Dorng.*—"I killed her because she and Dorng had promised Waryi Waryi a tomahawk, but instead of giving it to him they gave it to Jerrimerrili. This made Waryi Waryi very angry. He told me and asked me to kill this woman. I was at the Mission. That woman went to look for palm nuts. I told everyone I was going to look for kangaroo. Before this Waryi Waryi and I had planned how it would be done. Waryi Waryi went to sleep at the well on the other side of Millingimbi Island, and I was to stay on this side and we were to meet halfway.

"I had only gone part way when I saw this woman. I followed her for a long distance. She was walking toward the other side of the island. There were a number of women with her. When they got well into the bush the party broke up and went in different directions. She went by herself.

"Waryi Waryi was coming the other way. He had a dog with him and was catching bandicoot. The dog was helping him. I followed the woman. I had a fish spear with me. I sneaked up to within a few feet of her and threw the fish spear through the calf of her leg.

"She screamed, 'Ya-kai! Ya-kai! Ya-kai!' I jumped and grabbed her from behind. She became very frightened but I held her. I put my foot against her Mount of Venus. She changed until she felt as if she were dead.

"Waryi Waryi came up closer. He looked at us. He thought that she and I were having sexual intercourse. When I saw him I was a very little frightened. I walked a little distance away and fell down on my knees and tried to crawl away, but Waryi Waryi called out, 'Don't be afraid, I'll come help you.'

"I told him to fix her up because it was his job, while I made a fire to

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cook the bandicoots he and his dog had killed, because I felt hungry. I cooked the bandicoots while he operated. I didn't tell him what to do, for he knew as much as I do about these things. Waryi Waryi opened up her vagina as I do. He put the blood some distance away. The last drops from the heart were put in a small basket. I put this blood away and came back and ate my bandicoot. Waryi Waryi worked. He burned the spear-thrower, he put sweat on it, then applied it to the wound, then put some ant juice on and kept doing this. The hole kept getting smaller and smaller. It closed. He put strong mud in the fire and pushed it into the uterus. The mud was withdrawn and more put in. He always put his sweat on first. The wound that had been made closed and the mud dropped out.

"He asked, 'Have you finished eating bandicoot?'

"I said, 'Yes.'

"He said, 'I'll eat now; you come work.'

"He went to the bandicoot and started eating. I took some green ants and a small lizard. I turned the woman on her stomach. The lizard was alive. I opened its mouth. I put it against the woman's large intestine. He bit. The intestine jumped back like it was afraid of the lizard. I shook green ants on it and it went back very quickly. After it went inside I turned her over. I rubbed the spear-thrower with her blood. She breathed deeply when I waved it over her. I pulled her eyelashes and fingers and toes. I whirled the spear-thrower around her again. She spat out her breath. She stretched and got up. She picked up her basket and yam stick and left.

"Waryi Waryi said to me, 'That bandicoot belongs to you that is left over. You can finish this woman. I am going the other way.'

"I ran ahead of her and waited for her. When she came past me I had a small stick with me. I hit her across the stomach. It cut her in two. The chest and head fell one way, the abdomen and legs the other, then I couldn't see her at all. I looked and looked. About fifty yards ahead she appeared again. I ran up ahead of her again and hid. When she came I hit her again and cut her in half. The head went one way, the body the other. I saw them fall on the ground. While I looked the body disappeared. I looked the way she was going for I knew she would appear in that way. She fell down to the ground like a leaf. When she hit the ground she was like a woman and carried her yam stick and basket. She carried her firewood and went home with her palm nuts. I went another way. She lived four days and died. I gave her that time."

Na-yil-li-wil-li.—"I killed him at night. My young brother, Gunnumbilli, helped me. My brother is dead now. Afterwards someone killed him with magic. Indjoka's brother [a Birkili clansman] had been killed. Somebody had killed him with magic and then a spear had got him. His pubic covering had blood on it. Dorng took it off the dead man and

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754 gave it to me. 'My kutara has been killed,' he said, 'you buy him back for me.'

"We two brothers left our Marunga camp and sneaked up on the Rarungalk camp where this man was. When we got to the Rarungalk camp we sat down. We had a turtle rope with us twenty feet long. Each of us took an end of the rope. I sneaked up while my brother held the rope. I made a loop in it before I got there. Nayilliwilli was asleep. I put one arm under him and lifted his head up and put the loop over it. I did not tighten it. I pulled on the rope to tell my brother to twist it. He twisted it by rolling it on his thigh with his hand. I stood by the sleeping man and kept the loops straight on the neck. It came tighter and tighter and then he couldn't call out. He did not jump about. His eyes protruded. He gurgled when the rope broke his Adam's apple.

"I pulled the rope and my brother slackened it. I pulled it again and my brother carried the rope and walked toward me. The rope was put on the dead man's chest. My brother picked him up by the legs and I carried him by the head. We sneaked out with him to the jungle down by the sea. Our tracks were covered up by the young people and women when they walked around in the morning, so they could not follow us. Nayilliwilli had a very old wife. She slept by herself. I did not, nor did my brother, sleep with her.

"When we had carried him to the jungle I opened him up and pulled back three ribs, and by the way I told you before I got into the heart and stuck it with a stick. The blood went 'drrrrr—rrr—r-r-r-r' at first and then 'dirt!—dirt!—dirt!' We had made a very large paper-bark basket that day at the same time we had made the rope to kill him. The stick was not pulled out until we had him lying on his side and elbow in the proper way. When the blood stopped running I picked him up again.

"I hid the spear-thrower and applied the green ants. I always put sweat on the spear-thrower first to make it strong. (I do not use mud or lizard at night because you can't find them. I use it in the daytime with both men and women.) I then painted the speart-thrower with blood and whirled it around his head. He gasped. I whirled it again, and he kicked. I left him this way. I took another nest of green ants and shook it on the large intestine. When it comes out it is all red and swells. It is alive and it is like the heart.

"The ants bit him and the large intestine went back. The next time I shook them it went back further. The fourth time I did it, it ran in.

"I painted the spear-thrower with blood and whirled it around his head. He moved and breathed as though he were properly alive. I turned his tongue upside down and then hit him on the head with the spear-thrower. He spat his breath out and trilled his lips as he did it.

"I said, 'You go there,' and pointed toward his camp fire. I watched

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him as he walked. He went to his camp and sat down. He coughed and cleared his throat as he did this. I took the blood and put it over by the trees which are near the Macassar well. I circled through the mangrove jungle and came out by the camp. Before I left I told him he had three days to live. 'You will sleep one night here on the island and the next night you will sleep on the mainland. The next day you will die.'

"He got over on the mainland that next day and died."

Li-a-nun-ga (*Burera young man*).—"I went over to Cape Stewart to eat some palm trunk food. Lianunga had come over another way to this country. He was there ahead of me. He had gone out to get palm trunk food and had gathered it and put it by the well where he was burning and pounding it to make it ready for eating. I asked, 'Are you here by yourself?' He said, 'Yes.'

"He got up and walked a little way. I threw a fish spear and hit him in the left side under the arm. I use a fish spear so that it will not make a large hole and draw too much blood as other spears do. He fell down when he was hit. I left him and walked over and gathered some djelkurk [orchid] and morlupana [a lizard found around fresh water]. I also got some green ants.

"I pulled the spear and the blood came with it. The blood was black. I knew it was from the heart. I turned him on his side and elbow. It ran out very quickly, and it was black and not red. Soon it ran slowly and stopped. I took sweat from my nose and warmed my fingers over the fire. I put sweat on the spear-thrower after that. I didn't use green ants because the hole was a little one and they were not needed. I painted the spear-thrower with blood and whirled it around his head. He moved. I turned him over then and worked on the large intestine. I threw green ants on it. It came back a little way and stopped. Finally it went inside. I put more blood on the spear-thrower and hit him on the head and turned his tongue. I painted the spear-thrower again and whirled it. He breathed deeply and blew on his lips. I straightened his fingers and toes and eyelashes.

"I said, 'You go along to the sun beach with your food.' He went to look for fish. I came out to the camp too. I saw him and sat down. I had told him he would die next day. The next day he was dead."

Mur-in-dit.—"Murindit was cooking fish on the mainland on this side of Cape Stewart. I followed his tracks down there. Milanginunga, an old man, asked me to kill Murindit because the young man was sweethearting with his wife. He did not want to fight that boy because Murindit was young and strong and Milanginunga was old. I gave him a sting-ray fish. I told him to go wash it while I went to spear some more. I went down to the sea and speared a shark. While I was doing this I thought, 'That old man has asked me to kill him.'

"I looked around. The men were a long way off. I was going to kill

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754 him by magic with the fish spear but he was in the jungle looking for fresh water. I went down to the well. He had started to clean the sting-ray. I sat down beside him and helped him. When the cleaning was finished he gave me some of the fish. I stood up. While I stood there I thought, 'I'll get him now.'

"I grabbed him. He fought and fought. He tried to get away. I held his arms. I put a hand down on his scrotum and pulled it. This broke the strings holding it. He fell down. I looked around for an orchid to cover my hands and arms but I found another tree, barlk barlk.

"I opened him at the shoulder bone because I was in a hurry. I took the spear-thrower and broke the flesh where the bone meets the shoulder on the left side and pushed my hands in until I felt his heart. [There is a belief among the Murngin that the throat and heart have direct connection and that the heart inhales and exhales breath through the throat.] 826

"I stuck the heart with my killing stick and pulled the stick out and held the body at the waist with the head and trunk down. The blood came very quickly, and then slowly until it stopped. I swallowed his soul. I closed up the wound I had made with ants and the spear-thrower as I told you before. I took my killing stick and stuck a necklace of marks all around his neck because he was Dua. This was to make him like a flying fox hanging from a tree. I mixed up grease from my nose and sweat from my arms and rubbed these holes and shut them up. I rubbed blood then on my spear-thrower and whirled it. He turned a little.

"I then turned him over and fixed his large intestine. I got a large nest of green ants and scattered them on the large intestine. I did this four times.

"I then carried the basket of blood and hid it away. I took a little out with the spear-thrower. I rubbed it on the spear-thrower and hit him on the head and twisted his tongue. I pulled his eyelashes, fingers and toes. I told him for two days he would be alive and the third day he would die.

" 'Come in,' he said, 'we'll cook this sting ray and eat it.'

"I said, 'You have been asleep and left me all the work to do.'

"He said, 'Yes, I have been in a very deep sleep.'

"He didn't eat and went home. I came the other way. He slept that night. Next day he went out fishing and got some oysters. He went another day. Next day he tied his chest and head up with a curing string. He was sick. He died without eating, in the middle of the night."

Other Varieties of Magic

In addition to the ordinary soul-stealing there are several other varieties of magic found among the Murngin. Among them are projection of foreign objects into the victim (see under white magic), image magic, singing magic, possession by an evil spirit, and dream magic.

Image magic (bidji).—This can be performed by anyone. The per-

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son (or persons) who is interested in destroying another mixes up a number of colors and paints the image of his intended victim on a large stone. The head represents that of the man, the nose and ears are kangaroo's, the arms, fingers and legs a human being's, the foot kangaroo's, the scrotum a man's, and the penis kangaroo's. During the period of painting, the man or men talk to the image, saying, "You will kill So and So." The name of the victim is pronounced. When the image is completed the magicians gather a large quantity of firewood and place it underneath the stone and around it, light it, and while the blaze burns they talk to it: "You must let us know by and by when you break, Stone, you must let us know when you make that popping noise when you break." The fire burns, and the stone becomes so heated that it finally breaks. Meanwhile the men who have painted the image watch and listen. When the stone finally breaks they know that the soul of their victim, who may be far away, will scream in pain "Ya-kai! Ya-kai!" because the soul and heart of the man have been affected in exactly the same way as the stone; the men who have painted the image can always hear the man cry out.

It is believed that in two or three days after the stone breaks the victim will wake up from his sleep and feel very weak and ill, that his body will swell up, his ears grow large and his nose run with blood, that his elbows and nails will split and his skin and testes crack. The man will walk around one year or more before he dies. The men who have done the killing tell of it after a time, saying, "We did this thing for him, we killed him." The news travels and soon everyone knows it. Gradually the living man's fingers slough off, and in time he dies.

From the above description of how image magic affects its victims it can be discerned that leprosy is felt to result from this variety of sorcery. The relatives of a man who has died of leprosy always feel that they must retaliate, for they believe that members of an enemy clan have caused the disease—despite the fact that the victim may have eaten stale fish (see page 144).

Singing Magic.—The Murngin believe that certain songs are the most deadly of all magic. Three men were spoken of as singing magicians, all of them being trusted informants of mine. Not one of them would admit that he had this ability. It was my belief that they were telling the truth. Possibly the tribes farther south use some sort of singing death magic, but I collected no evidence in proof of this. There is no question but that everyone is extremely afraid of it. All warned me not

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754 to attempt to have anyone sing it for me, since it was too dangerous and would be likely to kill me. This was said even by the men who were willing and anxious to demonstrate the sorcery which removed the soul by the opening of the heart.

If a man who has sung another suddenly changes his mind and wishes to save him, he can swim out into the water at daylight, wash himself, return to the shore, and paint himself with red ocher. But it is insisted that if the singer did not swim and paint himself his victim would surely die. According to the natives the far-off country to the south is where all the people sing this death magic against the men of the north. This region to the south is no definite place. It is here "that stones walk like men." "These stones walk around and sing these songs, and men follow and listen and learn them and sing them and make the men in the north sick."

One of the most deadly songs is the whitefish song. The breath of its victim comes rapidly and very hard, which means that the fish has eaten out the insides of the person. The tide regulates the time of the death. When it comes in, the victim becomes extremely ill, his heart beats very fast, and everyone says, "Who has done this and who has sung this song?" When the tide goes out again, the person becomes a little stronger, and when it has reached its lowest ebb he feels almost normal. As the tide comes in the victim becomes sicker and continues to grow weaker until at full tide he dies.

753 Balliman's sister was very ill with bronchial pneumonia. Everyone
754 knew she had been "sung" by the whitefish song because she continued to expectorate and vomit. When she became sick the tide was well in; when it went out she got better. Ultimately, in spite of this extremely strong magic, she recovered. During the crisis there was talk about everyone's being forced to go in swimming in order that the old men could see who had done the singing by observing those who refused to go in: they would be guilty. Nothing came of the talk. Although the woman was supposed to die from this powerful magic and everyone was certain she had been sung, there seemed to be no criticism of the belief after it had failed to operate.

826 *Possession by a Mokoi.*—The Murngin believe that deafness, dumb-
828 ness, and insanity are due to possession of the afflicted one by a mokoi.
732 Other illnesses are also caused by the entrance of a mokoi into the head of the victim. There were two deaf and dumb men in the group, one of them a near imbecile, the other mentally normal. The first had to be watched and taken care of by all the others in order to remain

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alive, while the second provided for himself and was treated like any other man except that he talked and was spoken to by a sign language. The relatives of these two assume that mokois had entered their heads and that some day they would be led out into the bush, where someone would steal their souls, for "plenty of crazy men have been killed that way." It is thought that when these men were babies a dog had walked over the body of the more normal one a few times but had then been kicked out of the way; while the dog had walked over the other one several times, thus making him much more insane. "That one [the normal one]," said his brother, "when he was a baby a dog walked over him once and maybe twice. That made it so he couldn't hear or talk. I think that other one had a dog walk over him five or six times before his mother kicked that dog. I think that when the mother of that first boy kicked that dog he yelped and that is the reason he is not silly like that other crazy man. That other dog just went 'Unh' and didn't call out, and that is the reason his head is no good."

Image Whipping.—Another form of magic is to draw an image and then go over the whole of the body, naming each part and using the name of the intended victim. The image is then whipped with strings. This will cause a man's body to rot to pieces, and it is supposed to have killed several men among the various tribes in northeastern Arnhem Land.

Dreaming and Magic.—A bad dream can also cause sickness. Dreams of an open grave, of a recently dead man, or of the totemic emblem are among those which cause a man to rise from his sleep, build up his fire, put a branch of green leaves in the fire until it is smoking, brush himself off, and, if it seems to have been a particularly unpleasant dream, brush off the members of his immediate family.

Excretion and Magic.—There is a certain amount of fear among the Murngin that excreta or waste food products will be picked up by an enemy sorcerer and used to inflict sickness upon them. The belief, however, is not very strong, since no great care is exercised to hide this matter so that it cannot be used by the sorcerers. A man, however, before urinating or defecating, digs a hole and squats over it. He is seldom seen standing while urinating. Women squat too, but when in the bush put their hands on their knees and bend their knees slightly while remaining partially upright.

If there is a particular fear of magic, fish bones, kangaroo bones,

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754 anything that a man or woman has been eating are carefully picked up and hidden.

754 514 The magicians are believed to take the excrement at times and place it in a fire where there are hot stones which are supposed to make the victim very ill; at other times it is placed between the limbs of two trees, as are the pieces of refuse; the rubbing of the branches causes a sore in the victim's throat.

C. White Magic and the Healer

755 White magic is an effective force used to cure sickness, heal wounds, take away the malignant effect of a snake bite, and, in general, to remove from the individual a feeling of dysphoria and to give him a sense of well-being and adjustment to his community.

The white magician usually performs this function and applies this power. He can remove foreign objects which have been shot into the body of the sick man, and diagnose on the principle that the patient can live if the cause of illness is only a foreign object, but must die if his soul is stolen.

756 *Individuality and Social Personality of the White Magician.*—The individuality of the white magician is not different from that of the ordinary man. The only noticeable tendency in all the observed healers was their joviality and pleasantness in their ordinary social relations. There were no indications of the psychopathic personality, for psychologically and physically they were a very normal group.

The social personality of the healer is different from that of the ordinary man's only because of his additional magical powers; otherwise he participates in the culture much the same as anyone else. He marries, has children, hunts, fishes, fights, and enters the ceremonial life in a manner no different from that of other men. There is but one [184] rigid taboo on his behavior: he canont submerge himself in salt water without losing his power. Evidence is conflicting as to the existence of [262] food taboos. If there are such, they were not observed nor did the magicians admit any. The most successful healers were observed eating the foods which some of the evidence claimed were taboo to them. The reason for the belief in such restrictions seems to be that during their novitiate they undergo certain food privations.

The healer gains his power through extraordinary experiences with two or possibly three soul-children who afterwards become his helpers. [787] Both the medicine man and his familiars are called marngit. He can, in some cases, foretell the future and read a man's mind.

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in the chest. We don't feel well. Please, Munyiryir, help us.' I went then and took a shell and filled it with water and washed my hands. I felt over their chests and took out a bone and showed them. A man came from another country. He had a sore back. He said, 'I can't walk.' I looked from a long way and I saw that little hard thing inside him. I blew on his back and this thing came out a long way. I showed it to him. The other man went hunting for kangaroo then and his back didn't hurt him and he was very pleased.

"Those two spirits sit down on my shoulders. Sometimes they sit on my head. I call them my children. Sometimes they used to come to me in the night. They would say, 'There is a man sick over there.'

"In the early morning I would say, 'Where is that man?' and they would show me and they would say, 'He has got something inside him,' and they would show me where. Sometimes I used to take bushes and brush against the man and now blow on him and that hard thing would fall a long way from him.

"When I first started some of the people said, 'You are lying and not telling the truth.' I said to them, 'You look in my mouth.' I opened my mouth and let them see I had nothing in there."

A Case Record of Willidjungo's Treatments and Cures.—A Birkili clansman had an ache in his back. Willidjungo was called. He gave him the usual rubbing treatment, found the place that was painful, and removed a small stick. This had been placed within him, said Willidjungo, "by a mokoi. This mokoi was a swallow which swooped down over the camp. This bird is the mokoi of some very old dead person. He was angry because the victim had a yam stick in his possession that was owned by a Burera tribesman." The Burera are somewhat distant people from the Birkili and they are looked upon with extreme suspicion as great sorcerers by the tribes to the east of them. The mokoi, according to Willidjungo, had definitely tried to kill his patient. The mokois at times act in the rôle of vampire, since they can definitely attack a living man and make him ill or take away his good sense (make him insane).

Munyiryir, a former magician, had a very heavy cold in his lungs, which might have been a slight touch of pneumonia. After he had suffered a few days with it he called Willidjungo to treat him. Willidjungo brought his paraphernalia, including the spirit bag, a container of water, and, of course, his familiars. He removed a pointed stick from Munyiryir's side. He informed him that it was caused by an old mokoi. This mokoi came in the middle of the night and stood near their two camps (their huts were close together). In the middle of the night Willidjungo awakened his two wives and told them to look at the mokoi, which was standing by a tamarind tree. Both of them said that they had seen this ghost. When

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water. The container is put on red-hot stones to heat. When the water has boiled sufficiently to form a poultice the latter is cooled slightly and placed on the sore or wound. 278 752

Granuloma, yaws, and spear wounds can all be caused by magic. It is thought that a magician can cause them by stabbing a sting-ray prong into the track of his victim while at the same time calling out the name of the object of his magic or by singing one of the black magic songs. It is also believed that yaws in the nose and mouth can be caused by a man's throwing away his nasal septum stick, which is found by an enemy and placed between two branches of a tree that rub together. This smashes the nose piece, and the man's nose and mouth are affected by this process. 754

Sometimes if a man has a yaws sore on his foot a live clam is found and the foot placed over it. The clam is supposed to suck the soreness from it. When a man has been wounded, frequently one of his kinsmen places his fingers in the wound to see if the spear has gone through to a vital spot or not. If he cannot feel flesh at the end of his finger it is believed the man will die. 755

Sting-ray or Catfish Wound.—A variety of the bush beetle is macerated and rubbed on the wound. "It makes the sore feel quiet and easy." Cockroaches are also used in the same way. 278 752

Poisoning from Untreated Cycad Palm Nuts.—Occasionally children are made violently ill or die from eating untreated cycad nuts. The natives attempt a cure by rubbing the hair with the stickers from the leaf of the pandanus. 278 757

Ringworm (pur-o-pur-o).—This is "caused from nothing," for, according to Murngin thinking, it is due to a man's scratching himself, no magic being involved. Ringworm is treated by rubbing the offal found in a bees' nest or red ocher on the ringworm scales.

Constipation.—The yellow pollen found in a honeybees' nest is eaten dry. "It acts just like that Epsom salts you have," said my informant.

Festering Splinters.—The splinter is allowed to remain in the flesh until it festers, when it is easily taken out. Beeswax is made into a small splinter and pushed into the hole where the splinter has been. A firebrand is then touched to the end of the wax; this melts the inner part of it and allows it to penetrate farther into the sore. This is done particularly if the splinter is in the foot for it enables the man to walk more easily. 278 752

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CHAPTER VIII

A SOCIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF MAGIC

Section I. The Problem of Ritual and Magic Presented by the Northern and Southern Areas

Since the northeastern clans share a belief in magic but lack magical techniques and magicians, the people there either are forced to travel to the south and west for treatment by white magicians, such visits being comparatively rare, or resort to other means found within their own area. 184 756 484

In the south and west black and white magicians are found who have definite techniques for curing and for killing. 184 756

The social organizations of the two areas are identical; the totemic situation is the same, and in general there is little variation in the culture except for magical practices. With magical treatment absent in the north, the problem arises as to what to substitute for it, since there is the obvious necessity of attempting to cure an ailing man.

Throughout the north there is a general *belief* in black magic, but it is ascribed to sorcerers operating in the south. The relevant northern thinking on illness is not different from that in the southern area where the offending magician is also an outsider of the clan and the near kinship group. The difference is that there is no sorcerer within the northern groups to whom the people can appeal for punitive magic. It is analogous to knowing the effects of heavy artillery but not possessing it. The magical folklore of the north is sufficiently gruesome to cause the most fearsome apprehension in the minds of people who believe their illnesses caused by such practices. 184 754 [538]

The two more common accounts of black magical practices believed throughout the northern Murngin clans and among all the surrounding tribes follow. 754

1. Two or three magicians follow a man when he is by himself, rush upon him, and throw a spear into him. The man falls down and the others rush upon him. He is in a kind of coma. The mouth cannot move but

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784 the heart is still beating. "He is like he is asleep." He is laid on his stomach and a log is placed across his back and another one on his neck. The magicians first make fire, next gather some grass or paper bark and warm it over the fire, then place it against the skin of the victim to make it become soft and as though it were rotting. The sorcerers next gather a branch full of green ants and shake the ants over the man. The ants start stinging and biting him. The man kicks, starts crying out. Meanwhile, one of the black magicians has climbed up a nearby tree. He places his legs over a limb and hangs with his head down and looks over his shoulder at the "dead" man. The other two magicians command the "dead" man, "Look this way," and they point at the man in the tree. The man looks. "Oh, yes, there is a mokoi [trickster spirit] there," he says. The magicians then say to him, "A snake will bite you. You are a very weak man now." They say this over to him several times to make him remember. The man then gets up and picks up his spear. He wants to hit this mokoi. The two men say, "What have you been doing?" The man is a bit groggy and says, "I have been having a very long sleep." After that the men ask him, "What is the name of this mokoi?" The man replies with his grandfather's name. The man in the tree comes down and the three magicians and their victim leave. The man who has been in the tree playing the part of the mokoi gathers handfuls of bushes while the other two magicians watch. The victim stares at him. The sorcerer with the bushes hits the ailing man with them and cries out "Phee!" The skin of the man struck breaks open, his black skin being removed and his body becoming clear and white. The other two men take hold of him then, and after a little time his skin once more turns black. The two men walk along beside their victim while the man who was in the tree runs a few hundred yards away and waits for their approach. When they get near him he yells at the victim and once more the latter's skin turns white and gradually turns black again. Again the magician who has been in the tree runs, hides and waits for the others to come near him. Once more he cries out and the white coloring comes from "the center of the body from head to feet." The magician who has waited for them now says, "This sick one is properly dead." The man who has been treated by the magicians still has a wound showing where the spear has hit him. When he gets near the camp so he can hear the murmur of the camp voices the flies come out, bite upon the wound and close it up so that when he gets into the camp there is no indication that the flesh has been disturbed. By the time he has reached the camp the magic has made him forget the operation of the medicine men although he has some kind of vague memory of it about which he tries to tell his relatives. He says to them, "I will tell you one thing." The relative says, "Yes, tell me." The victim replies, "Oh, nothing." He tries to remember but all he can say is "Oh, nothing." He lies down

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and goes to sleep. The next morning he walks around and feels all right. The next day he feels well, but he goes out in a canoe to fish and a shark comes up and kills him. "It might be that he goes out to hunt and a snake will bite and finish him or a crocodile catch him. He is like dead now."

2. Two or three magicians make up their minds to kill someone who has wronged one of them. The wrong may be no more than a failure to keep a promise to give one of them a bundle of spears. The magicians say to the man, "We know where there are a lot of fish and where there are a great number of kangaroo out in the bush. Come with us and we will show you." When they have gone a short distance into the bush or jungle one of the magicians winks knowingly at one of the others. They get a spear and one of them throws it into the man. The others rush upon him and hold him. When they have him down, one of them says, "I gave you a long time ago some spears and you promised me some in return and you have given me nothing." The man says, "Oh, let me go." The others say, "It is too late." They then place him on his stomach and put a log on his neck and another on his back. They sit still a little while. One man then cuts some paper bark and makes a small basket and another prepares a fire stick for future use. The victim is in a faint. They cut his side open above his heart. They open his heart and the blood runs out into the basket. "If you don't open his heart with a killing stick and let that blood out the man will not die." The fire has been made with the fire stick. Some clay is gathered and put on the sore. The clay heals the sore so that no one can see where it has been. Some green ants are gathered and thrown upon his body to force him to awaken. The victim kicks. When he does this, one of the men climbs up a tree. When the man awakens he says, "I have been in a very deep sleep." The man looks up and sees the other magician hanging down from his knees with his head looking over his shoulder at the victim. The wounded man says, "Ah, that is my grandfather looking for me. Give me a spear and I will kill him. He is my grandfather's soul." The magician comes down out of the tree then. The victim says, "I am going to tell everyone." The two magicians take hold of him and start walking with him. The other runs on in front of them and hides himself. When they get near him he cries out. This frightens the injured man and his skin turns white, then gradually black again. Once more the magician runs on ahead and hides and as they approach shouts again, and once more the body of the victim turns white and then returns to its natural color. This is repeated one or more times. The victim wants to fight but by this time he has become light-headed and talks crazily. When he says again that he is going to tell his relatives, the magicians command him to open his mouth and to stick his tongue out. He obeys and they twist his tongue upside down. The man leaves them

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754 and goes to the camp. As he approaches it he can hear the many noises of the general camp. A swarm of flies come out from the camp, light upon the sore, and feed upon it. The sore heals rapidly so that no trace is left of the wound. When the man enters the camp he says to his relatives, "I have something I want to tell you." His relatives reply, "Yes, you must tell us." But the victim can only say, "Nothing." In a few days he dies. The magicians return to where they have opened the heart of their victim and clean up the place so that there is no trace left of their operations. They gather up the basket of blood and take it with them.

The Stealing of a Woman's Soul According to the Folklore of the Northern Clans

Two or three men sneak out into the bush and wait for the arrival of the woman they expect to kill. They pretend to hunt for food but actually they are looking for the woman. When they see her they take the stone heads out of their spears, place the spear shaft in their spear-throwers and wait. When she is close enough they throw their spears, trying to hit her in the breast. The woman drops as though she were dead. At other times one of the men pretends that he is calling her to flirt with her and she comes over. He asks her to lie down beside a clump of bushes and she thinks that he is going to lie on top of her. Instead of this he kicks her Mount of Venus with his heel. The woman faints.

The men start operating on her. They do not cut her as they would a man. The sorcerer who is to open her heart wraps his hand up very tightly with string. The doctor pushes his hand, with the killing stick in it, up through her uterus. All the men turn their heads and backs, refusing to look at the vagina. If they should look there is great danger of spoiling the effects of the magic; they are liable to be overcome with sexual desire, causing an erection which would destroy the magic because it would be bad luck.

When the sorcerer reaches the heart he thrusts the killing stick in it and allows the blood and spirit to come out. The heart's blood is buried.

The sorcerers now make a fire and put stones in it. When the stones have become red hot, they take lily leaves which have been soaked in water and throw them on the fire. They put the steaming leaves inside the woman and the steam is supposed to heal the wound and hide all trace of the effects of the black magic.

A branch which has a green ants' net on it is held by one of the men while he shakes it over the legs of the victim. She kicks and awakens. One of the men runs and climbs a tree just before she is completely awake. A sorcerer on the ground says to her, "What is the name of that woman up that tree?"

The woman replies, "That is my grandmother who has been dead a

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long time." The woman attempts to hit the man who is up the tree with her yam stick because she thinks him to be the soul of her dead ancestress. The remainder of the process is exactly the same as that for a man.

Ritualistic Curing of Illness in the North

When a person is ill in the north he is placed in a specially prepared representation of the totemic well of his clan. This can be con-

FIGURE 2.—SYMBOLIC TOTEM WELL FOR CURING RITUAL

structed at any place where the people happen to be camping, or on the ceremonial ground. The well consists of two circles connected by a channel (see Figure 2). One circle, slightly larger than the other, is about four and one-half feet in diameter (A), the other being about three feet in diameter (C). The connecting channel is about ten feet long and about two feet wide (B). The well is made by excavating earth with the hands from the center and piling it up six inches to one foot high along the outline of the channel. Leaves are placed over the heaped-up earth. The larger circle represents the actual totem well found in the clan country of the sick man. The channel is the place where the water flows out of this particular well, and the smaller circle is the "hole where the fresh water comes out." This conventional pattern is always used to symbolize a totemic well, no matter whether it be of the Yiritja or the Dua moiety. Holes are made connecting the various compartments (D), one from the large well to the channel and another from the channel to the small well. These are

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and make a living man more like the dead. A man goes to sleep because a bone has been put in the fire by him and he is killed by his enemies (see the account of a clan feud in the war chapter). A man cannot run when chased by his enemies because one of them is blowing on a dead man's bone in his mouth, or an evil soul enters a man's head and makes him crazy, the power of the soul coming from that of the dead.

The two classes, that of the totem and of the dead, are but two varieties of one general type, for both of them belong to the world of the sacred. Their power is contagious and dangerous unless properly handled by ritual. The totem can cause sickness and death just as the power of the dead can produce these same effects.

The Behavior of the Individual and the Society When Magic Is Put into Effect

The isolation of the various elements in the particular social configuration surrounding the death of a victim of black magic may help illuminate the fundamental nature of Murngin magic and explain its potency and unusual effectiveness; and a general analysis of the group behavior under such a situation will be profitable.

When the supposed theft of a man's soul becomes general knowledge, the sustaining social fabric pulls away from the victim. The familiar attitudes of the kinship personalities change, the collaboration of the victim and his society, of which his social personality has always been an integral part, ceases. The group now acts with all the ramifications of its organization and with countless stimuli positively to suggest death to a suggestible individual. The ordinary daily activity of the victim's social life is removed. The society itself creates a situation which, if unchanged, makes it impossible for the individual to adjust himself to it even though he tried; and in addition he usually not only makes no effort to live and to remain part of his group but actually, through the multiple suggestions from it, cooperates in his withdrawal therefrom. He becomes what his society's attitudes make him, committing a kind of *suicide*. The social configuration in which he finds himself operating at this time is one of anomia[2] for him. His ordi-

[2] Emile Durkheim, *Le Suicide*, Librairie Felix Alcan, Paris, nouvel edition, 1930. In general, anomic suicide is a type supposed to be due to the change in the society which surrounds the individual and gives him a feeling of maladjustment and of being "lost." The change here, however, is more dynamic than one of process; that is, the society as a functioning structure regularly performs this act upon individuals whose souls have been stolen, rather than that the society changes in a structural way and becomes something different from what it was before and by so doing causes the indi-

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nary social personality is removed, his part of the social structure not only having disintegrated but largely disappeared. Such a man is neither in the world of the ordinary nor in that of the sacred. He is, to use the literal Murngin expression, "half dead." Partly sacred since his soul is not in this world, he is in a position of danger, not only to himself as a spiritual entity, since his soul is neither in this world nor in its proper place in the totemic well, but also to his group, because a soul not properly ritualized and placed in the sacred well with the totemic spirits and sacred ancestors is likely to cause illnesses and death to those near him in kinship. Before death takes place the group, then, begin the mourning ritual the object of which is to transmute the social personality into a spiritual being, that is, to make the soul enter the totem well safely. Even before death the soul starts behaving like the sacred totem; the ancestors and dead relatives come for him and enter his heart; the soul "ceases" reciprocal relations with the profane living, relating itself to the sacred dead; and the living cease acting their everyday rôles and become virtually related to the sacred part of the dying person.

The personality of the victim thus has the ordinary attitudes of society removed from him, the taboo attitude of the sacred being substituted. He responds by recognizing his change of status: the wounded feudist killed by magic dances his totem dance to make himself like his totem and insure his immediate passage to the totem well; the man dying of an illness moves his hands convulsively like his crab totem or flaps his hands like his black duck totem, listening for the sounds of his ancestors' approach as he follows the suggestive sequence of the mourning song and ritual wailingly sung and danced over his body. His effort is not to live but to die.

There are two definite movements of the social group in the process by which black magic becomes effective. In the first movement the community contracts; all the victim's kin withdraw their sustaining support—everyone in his whole community, i.e., all his kin, completely change their attitudes and place him in a new category. He is seen no longer as an ordinary living being like all the other people, but as an abnormal person who is more nearly in the realm of the sacred and taboo. This movement of withdrawal by the society means that his place in the general social fabric has been taken away from him so that he now stands in an entirely different relationship to all of his

vidual to become maladjusted and suicidal. Since this is true, there are in this situation some of the elements of the type Durkheim calls the altruistic type of suicide in which the individual destroys himself because of the perfect working of the society.

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754 kin, his clan, and the general tribal grouping. The organization of his
763 social life has collapsed, and he is alone and isolated.

156 The second movement of the group is its return toward the victim under the integrating force of the mourning rite. The "half dead" man whose soul is in that dangerous position to the community of being neither sacred nor profane must be removed by ritual from any contact with his community; and its purpose now as an organized group with its ceremonial leader, a close relative of the victim's, is finally to cut him off entirely from the ordinary world and ultimately place him in his proper position in the sacred totemic world, that of the dead. The victim, on his part, reciprocates this feeling, behaving in the manner of his totem, with which he attempts to identify himself. The mourning rite is truly a *rite de passage*.

The effect of this double movement, first away from the victim and then back with all the compulsive force of one of the most powerful rituals, is obviously drastic. An analogous situation in our society is hard to imagine. If all a man's near kin, his father, mother, brothers and sisters, wife, children, business associates, friends and all the other members of the society, should suddenly withdraw themselves because of some dramatic circumstance, refusing to take any attitude but one of taboo and looking at the man as one already dead, and then after some little time perform over him a sacred ceremony believed with certainty to guide him out of the land of the living into that of the dead, the enormous suggestive power of this twofold movement of the community after it has had its attitudes crystallized can be somewhat understood by ourselves.

The magicians are the leaders who crystallize this group attitude. By the power of their rituals they organize social opinion and attitudes just as effectively and certainly as the ceremonial leader does by the sacred totemic ritual. Both depend upon the group's participation to make their power effective. It is a group situation, not an individual one, that is operative in both circumstances. It is the power of the "church" or community which integrates the total group, directed by the ceremonial leader in the totemic ceremonies, and it is the power of the church (the clan group) which destroys a man under the guidance and leadership of its magicians.

754 Black magic is a force expressed through the dysphoric condition of an individual member or members of a social group, and an ever present possible danger to all the members of Murngin society.

754 The attitude of the kinsmen of the man they believe to have been
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killed by black magic is most illuminating. The sorcerer belongs to a hostile group or, what is equivalent to the Murngin mind, to one so far away that it is unknown and strange. A sorcerer of one's own clan is not asked to kill any member of it or of friendly clans, but to destroy outsiders who are looked upon as enemies and who reciprocate. The source of the enemy sorcerer's power lies within the known antagonisms which connect one's group with the foreign groups. Probably it is the foreign group's mana, as thought of by the victim and his group, which attacks a member of one's own clan through the magician's ritual. It is the enemy's magician, it must be remembered, who helps organize the local community's attitudes toward the death of its own clansman, and it is likely that he also is an organizer of the outside clan's feelings. One's own sorcerer is equally feared by his clan's enemies, and the deaths in the enemies' clans are ascribed by them to the evil worked by him. The local sorcerer is not feared by his kinsmen; rather, they go to him in times of trouble and weakness, since his power can reestablish their own and their clan's sense of well-being by killing the enemy in retaliation for the slaying of their kinsman.

The power of the black magician, then, comes (1) from the very nature of the clan itself because of its antagonism and open warfare with the people of the victim, (2) from being associated with the dead, and (3) ultimately from the action of the victim's people because of their earlier withdrawal of support from him and later thrusting him from the society.

The mana of the ceremonial leader comes from his oral and ceremonial ritual, which in turn gains its power ultimately from a society or church, viz., the clan. The mana of the medicine man comes from his ritual, in which the group must participate by its belief if his technique is to be effective, which means that his source of power is in the group. He too must have and does have his church, which in Murngin society is the group of clans.

To sum up, the power of the black magician only reverses that of the white: the healer is a member of his own or a friendly group and his magic is made effective by the positive attitude of the victim's people; on the other hand, when black magic is at work, the symbolic behavior of the victim and his people is in response to what they believe to have been the magical acts of a representative of someone outside the clans of the victim and his near kin—and even though the black magician is not present, he is the symbol around which the members of the victim's group organize their sentiments in relation to the victim.

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sisters. After all the sacred drama had been enacted by them and they had been swallowed by the Great Father and taken down into the holy waters in the lower depths of the totem well, the Wawilak men arrived and saw the scene of the tremendous struggle in which the Wawilak sisters had used all of the sacred rituals they knew to prevent their being defeated by the great python. The men, who had been searching for the sisters, went to sleep there that night and during the night they dreamed. In the dream their Wawilak sisters returned and taught them all of the sacred ceremonies that they had sung and danced before being taken down into the sacred water hole. The souls of the Wawilak men were the beings who experienced and first learned these ceremonies and transmitted them through the dream to the mundane bodies of the men, and from them the knowledge of how to perform correctly the great ceremonies was passed on from generation to generation to the present day.

Most of the dreams experienced by the Murngin are felt to be of a dangerous character and sometimes directly responsible for causing illnesses. Whenever a man has had a dream of this description he immediately builds up his fire and goes through the leaf (warntdjer) ceremony to chase away any evil which might have come with the dream, either in the form of the soul of a dead man, the power of some great totem, or because of associated images with the totem of the dead, as, for example, in the dream of an open grave or of a man with ceremonial blood upon him. If the dream is of the pronouncedly dangerous variety the man, when he awakens, may put his whole family through the warntdjer ceremony to make sure that the stronger evil has been removed. Dreams are definitely associated with black magic, for at times it is difficult for a man to determine which is dream and which is waking reality. Occasionally a man will have a dream in which he sees himself being subjected to sorcery; he awakens and believes the dream to have been something that happened to him in his waking experience.

Munyiryir's brother declared that Kimingmulu had attempted to steal his soul. He said that two or three nights before he made his accusation he was lying asleep with his wife in his camp on Pudjeriki Island when just before morning someone came along and stepped on his foot. He was dreaming at the time. He did not think this was part of his dream but that someone was trying to steal his soul. When he awakened he looked to see who had stepped on him because he thought that someone was trying to get hold of him to put a log on him. He followed the tracks that were near him and discovered them to be Kimingmulu's. He said nothing to the suspected sorcerer but talked the matter over with his brothers and other near relatives. The man he accused was a member of a group with whom his clan had had strained relations. After careful interviewing it became clear that Munyiryir's brother did not know which was dream and which was actuality, but that his seeing the tracks of one who belonged to a pos-

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sible enemy group made him decide in favor of the reality of his experience. 787 754

After much conversation and discussion about it among the members of the two groups, it was decided that it must have been a dream and that it was not true. It was obvious that both sides wanted the relations to remain friendly.

There is some evidence that dreaming may explain the beliefs of sorcerers that they have killed certain people, since once a man gains a reputation for being a killer, and given the fact that the sorcerer kills men who stand in unfriendly relations with his group, it seems highly likely that some of his dreams would organize his antagonisms into a folk pattern in which he would be the soul stealer and his enemies the victims.

APPENDIX V

MURNGIN PERSONAL NAMES

The personal names of the Murngin are directly or indirectly connected with the various parts of the social structure to which the possessor belongs. 551 The kinship and family structure are given expression in the fact that a man usually obtains his father's father's or mother's mother's brother's names, which conforms to the alternation of generation principle found in the extended kinship organization and in the subsection system. The clan and moiety are directly related to the personal names because some of the sacred and secular names always refer to an individual's totem and are usually connected with a clan well, or they may be the names of certain mythological ancestors which are again connected with the clan well. These names may be part of the Narra ceremony, since the names of the clan wells and those of the totem are called during this ritual. This is also true of the Wawilak cycle of rituals because the names of the ancestors are shouted during such ceremonies as the Djungguan, which means again that they have a totemic reference. A partial list of the names follows: 614 616

Men's Names: 551

Dar-per-aoi: the clan country from which this individual came.

Gur-nirn-oi: from the stone found in his clan country.

Walt-chi-mi: the name of a hollow drum-like totemic emblem which is supposed to stand up and walk around in the water and make a noise like a trumpet playing.

Nal-mi-a: mosquito.

Gan-du: refers to a totemic song and ship, the black color of a sail.

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Magical Beliefs

[578] 754 A profound belief in magic enters very largely into the life of these people, and is a very fruitful cause of tribal quarrels and killings. The most important of these beliefs concerns magical killings by sorcerers known as "Ragalk."

According to this belief, the Ragalk, having selected his victim, or having been commissioned by another to bring about the death of a certain individual, waits until he finds this man alone, out hunting or passing between camps, and, seizing him, soon reduces him to a condition of unconsciousness. Then, making a deep incision into the thorax, he thrusts in his hand and squeezes all the blood out of the victim's heart and other organs. The blood is caught in paper-bark baskets, and allowed to dry, and is later partaken of by the Ragalk and his companions. These are usually two or three younger men being instructed in this art of magical killing. Having secured the blood, the Ragalk, by an elaborate process, hides all traces of the operation and restores the victim to consciousness and normal life, so that he returns to camp entirely unaware of what has taken place. Before releasing him, the Ragalk determines how long the victim shall live, which may be for several weeks, and by what means he shall actually die. He may determine that the man shall die from snake-bite, or be speared, or taken by a shark or crocodile, but, whatever happens, it is the Ragalk who is really responsible for the person's death.

682 761 Among these people there is no belief in death from natural causes, so that every death is believed to be the result of evil magic, and steps are immediately taken to determine who is responsible for it. The number of men who are believed to possess this magical power is limited, so it is usually a matter of determining which one of a comparatively small number is guilty. This is done by methods which are utterly unscientific, but which are thoroughly convincing to the aboriginal mind. In this way tribal quarrels and vendettas are begun and continued, and practically every death is followed by a violent upheaval of the tribal life.

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Magic and Disease.

The exercise of magic is also believed to be the cause of epidemic and other diseases. One man known to me is suffering from leprosy in an advanced form, and the belief is that his condition is the result of magic directed in the following way:—The man who desired to injure him, because of a quarrel over an aboriginal woman, first of all built a rude bark hut. On the inside of the bark a grotesque figure was drawn, to which was given the name of the victim. The hut was then fired, and, as it burned, this man is said to have "sung" his victim, expressing the desire that as the fire destroyed the figure on the bark, so disease would destroy the other man. 753 754

When an epidemic of measles broke out at Goulburn Island, the cause was looked for locally, and one of the old men supplied the following explanation:—Some time previously a man had died of injuries received in a tribal quarrel. That death had never been avenged, so two of his tribal brothers made their way to a spot on the mainland which is associated with the activities of their tribal ancestors, and so is tabu. Taking some damp earth from this spot, these men lit a fire, in which stones were heated, the sacred earth being then placed on the heated stones, and the whole covered with paper-bark.

As the smoke and steam emerged, these men danced round the fire, and, addressing the smoke, requested it to go over to the island and smite the people there with sickness and death, as punishment for the killing of their brother. Proof that it did so is for these people found in the fact that disease came, and a number sickened and died.

The coming of whooping cough to our Milingimbi Station is explained in a similar way. Near to this station is another of these places sacred to two mythological female ancestors. Legend has it that at this spot these women were seized with a serious coughing complaint, and, ejecting the sputum, remarked, "We will leave this sickness here for future inhabitants of this place." A man, who is believed to have had a grudge against certain of our station people, is said to have first cut down a milk-wood tree at this sacred spot, and to have reduced it to small chips. He next stooped over these chips, coughing and spitting, until he fell exhausted. On recovering, he placed these prepared chips on a [778]

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
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753 fire, and, as the smoke ascended, he asked it to carry this coughing
754 sickness to these people.

754 In this aboriginal community are men known as Gulung, or
756 "Marrngit," who exercise magic in a curative or preventive way. Their chief function is to discover and combat the sinister purposes of the Ragalk, or of evil spirits. Neither the Ragalk nor the Marrngit occupy a position apart from the ordinary life of the people, nor do they exercise any special functions in the ceremonial life of the tribe.

628 Magic is also believed to operate through an article known
765 as "Maiyabala." When a man dies or is killed, a scrap of one of
778 his bones, or a piece of one of his weapons or utensils, is given by one of his near relatives to each of his friends. This article is known as a "Maiyabala," and carries with it this important significance. Every man accepting the "Maiyabala" places himself under the obligation of doing his best to avenge the death of the deceased. I have known men who have allowed themselves to be persuaded into accepting the "Maiyabala," to be later deeply troubled when they have considered the probable consequences of their action. There is no way of escaping the obligation, and these men have thus made themselves party to a serious quarrel which probably does not concern them.

[672] When a man, in fulfilment of this obligation, kills another, he
765 is usually relieved from personal responsibility in the matter, the
778 magical property of the "Maiyabala," by directing the man's spear and giving strength to his throw, being regarded as the actual cause of the killing. The Maiyabala is also worn as a charm, and is believed to assist the wearer in fighting or in the pursuit of game, the idea being that the spirit of the dead man reinforces and assists that of the wearer of this relic.

775 Closely allied to the above are some of the beliefs concerning the "Mali," or lesser spirits, of men who have been killed. When a man has killed another it is believed that the "Mali" of the slain seeks to enter the person of the slayer, the idea here being that, by overcoming the man's body, the victor has also overcome his spirit, which now seeks to serve its new master. Numbers of men of my acquaintance claim to have passed through this experience.

182 a man's or woman's own horde with whom he or she comes
431 into daily contact. They extend also to members of
461 other hordes and are emphasised strongly on occasions
602 when people from distant groups to whom the kinship
[574] organisation is extended, come as visitors. For a young man, such obligations are intense, and to discharge them he is obliged to keep up an almost continuous stream of presents, which entails constant work.

182 With each successive stage of initiation it is obligatory
431 for him to make gifts to the old men of the clan group into
461 which he is being initiated. This may become very irksome
626 and may even reach a stage when no matter how hard he
561 works he is unable completely to discharge all his obligations, so laying himself open to the fear of reprisals, such as
[754] visitation by *kälka* (sorcerers who kill by the use of magic) or by other agencies. Fear of the use of secret methods of reprisal is a very real one, and provides, for a man, one of the strongest inducements to work, to keep pace with his obligations, and so to give no cause for resentment.

431 In those ceremonies such as the *kunabibbi* and *ŋulmark*
561 which transcend clan and tribal boundaries, and are not
796 restricted to, or regarded as the proprietary right of, a
614 small group such as a clan, but are practised widely throughout the territory, these obligations are less onerous. In
778 others, of the type called *märdai'in*, the initiation ceremonies carried out by each clan or group of clans sharing the same totems, at which its sacred totems are revealed, the burden of the gifts or payments is a heavy one. The internal solidarity of these small groups is intense, and their *märdai'in* or *räŋga*—the secret name for the objects which represent the *mälli*, the "shade" or "spirit" of the totemic ancestors themselves—are jealously guarded. These *räŋga* are very sacred and are regarded as dangerous to the

MORE RARELY, RESPONSIBILITY FOR FEED-
[465] ing the canoe-maker is assured by the man for whom the
396 work is undertaken. He is paid finally in *gerri*, such as bundles
431
437 of spears, baskets and tomahawks, which again take the form of "goodwill" (*ŋoi ŋämmatirri*) presents rather than payments calculated on the basis of exact economic equivalence. In these transactions, a bargain is rarely struck; the *djärtunmirri* is flattered by the request for his services to cut the canoe, and the *buŋgauwa lippa lippa*, the owner or master of the canoe, seeks to please the craftsman by making liberal gifts to ensure that the *djärtunmirri* is satisfied at
[152] the end of the transaction. For he knows that a man who
[578] harbours resentment will rarely declare this openly, but
[754] that he is likely to brood over it and eventually to seek the aid of a medicine man or sorcerer to avenge the wrong, real or imaginary. Even in this case, to which the name *mälli* is applied, the transaction is far removed from the level of simple purchase. But a big advance has been made in the recognition of craft specialisation and the idea of payment for the work of the specialist.

313 The responsibility of the owner, *buŋgauwa* (literally
396 master) of the canoe, does not end here. A suitable canoe tree is hard to find and he may be obliged to select a tree some distance from river or sea, and to manhandle the heavy craft on rollers cut for the purpose.

431 The handling and launching of a new canoe is a big
476 ceremonial occasion, and in consequence, a presentation of
396 food is expected of the *buŋgauwa* as a gesture of goodwill to those who assist in the launching of the craft. This again entails work and organisation, and above all, the co-operation of numbers of people, including women, with divergent interests, the whole forming part of an intricate and nicely balanced system of obligation and counter obligation, of gift and counter gift.

11: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1933 OI17 Murngin OI17

the patient is washed from head to foot by having water poured over him. This ceremony is believed to be particularly efficacious in cases of injury which have caused bleeding. In such cases not only does it aid the person's recovery, but also removes the tabu attaching to the shed blood. If, in the course of hunting, a man has been so injured, he must not give of his catch to another until by this ceremony he has been cleansed. This same ceremony is also used for the purification of the relatives of a recently deceased person. If a man be near his sacred pool the ceremony is performed there and he is washed in the actual " holy water " itself.

The most elaborate medical treatment of which I have knowledge is that carried out in cases of extreme constipation or for a severe attack of indigestion leading to a distension of the stomach and known as *worba*. First of all a rough platform of sticks is constructed. On this platform is laid a thick covering of leafy branches of *maipin* (ironwood tree) and on these leaves a covering of wet grass from some fresh water pool or swamp.

The sand beneath the platform is then scooped out and a fire made, which must be wholly of *maipin*, the leaves, bark, gum, and wood being used. When the fire is well burning the patient is placed, face downward, on the platform already prepared, a covering of boughs or paper-bark is placed over him, and there he is left for several hours to steam. He is then turned over on his back, and thus spends several more hours. At the end of the day he is bathed with cold water, and will almost certainly feel relieved, but if not, the process may be repeated the following day. In cases where no relief is afforded it is consequently known that the patient's condition is the result of evil magic. It is believed to be produced by some sorcerer getting hold of something belonging to the patient—his loin-cloth or *balara* (pubic shield) being considered particularly effective. After " singing " this article he opens out the coals and ashes of his fire, and in the centre digs a small hole, into which he crams it. He then fills the hole with earth, scrapes back the coals and ashes, and once more " sings " over it his evil chant, at the same time naming the man he wishes to injure. This operation results in a stoppage of the man's bowels, and so produces a condition which nothing can relieve, and which ultimately ends in death.

14: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943) 1961 OII7 Murngin OII7

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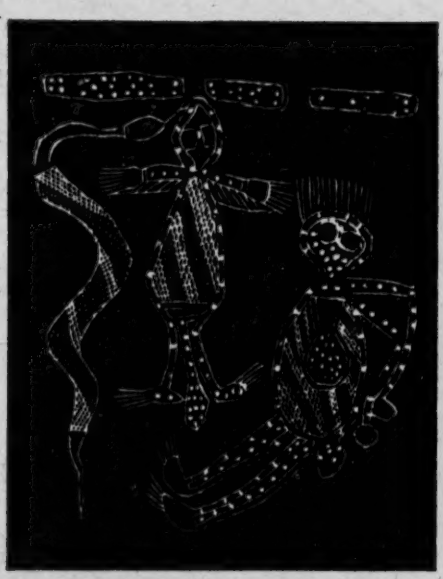
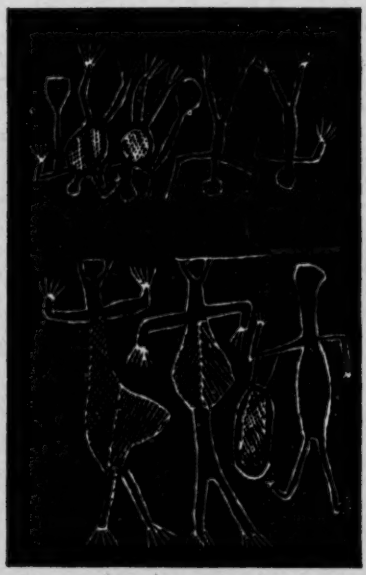


(a) Marrngit *of Mun'nyeri'nyir of Tjamparpoingo clan. The three flat objects at the top are stones, with holes represented by spots. The winged male* marrngit *is Mallagurrpallamirr, the other his wife (and sister) Barrambit. They come from Gurruwanna on the mainland of Arnhem Land behind Howard Island. Left, the snake Bundango.*



(b) *The six* marrngit *of Wilindjango of Mildjingi clan, Lower Clyde River, and the 'shade'* (malli) *of the* marrngitmirri *himself, lower right. Next to him are Nari, male, and Martung'dung, the female; the bulge is the womb in which she bore the four junior* marrngit *above.*

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(c) *Wilindjango, whose* marrngit *are shown in (b) above. This man was also a renowned rainmaker of his clan. The basket-like structure on his forehead is* ngamak *(lit. flesh), dried human flesh or* mango *(blood) which are used in the practice of magic and ritual cannibalism. The two small wooden pegs projecting from the basket are yel and are made from ironwood* (Erythrophlœum labouchœrii). *They are part of the stock in-trade of the* marrngit.

(d) *Sorcerer, called* ragalk *or* kalk', *Burara Tribe, Cape Stewart district, north central Arnhem Land, with* kandjurma, *stiletto-like objects sharpened to a fine point and made from ironwood called* maipin. *The* ragalk *are said to insert these* kandjurma *into the hearts of their victims by way of the neck, thence down the dorsal aorta. In this way they claim the* ragalk *draws out the blood of his victim. In Australia these* kandjurma *are popularly known as 'pointing bones.'*

'MARRNGIT,' 'MARRNGITMIRRI' AND 'KALKA'

Photographs (c, d): D. F. Thomson

[Facing p.97]

magical rites and spells, it does not involve the co-operation of spirit familiars.

The majority of informants stated that the cult of the *marrngit* is not a hereditary one, and they asserted that although the son of a *marrngitmirri* father may also be *marrngitmirri*, membership of the cult does not necessarily pass from father to son. But at least one informant of Wanguri clan, a clan of Mindjikai *barpuro*, declared that in his own clan, of which the principal territory is at Arnhem Bay, a little to the south and east of Elcho Island, the cult of the *marrngit* was hereditary and did pass from father to son. On controversial issues of this kind, long discussions often took place among the old men who acted as informants, and finally they would reach agreement and give me their verdict. Far from being careless or merely anxious to please, they took great pains to check information by referring to people who possessed specialized knowledge, and took much trouble in settling any doubtful point. My informants declared that the *marrngit* was also hereditary in the Burara tribe, where, however, the cult of the *ragalk* was also established and was certainly dominant. Some conflict, or difference of opinion, does occur in matters of this kind particularly in north-eastern Arnhem Land where there is no hard and fast, or orthodox, view, supported by a large body of opinion.

This means that, as might be expected, in the absence of a written language or an organized body to formalize belief, there is necessarily some degree of flexibility, some scope for individual ideas, and within the atypical, intensely segmentary, social organization of eastern Arnhem Land, this variability tends to be emphasized. Even in matters of kinship, which concerns the entire group, since it regulates all behaviour, differences sometimes occurred and the people would call in old men and submit an intricate or knotty problem to them in the way that I have mentioned above.

It was intended originally to confine this paper to a short account of the *marrngitmirri*, translated from the statements of the medicinemen themselves, and to follow this with descriptions of the *marrngit*, which are shown in the accompanying plates of actual drawings of their spirit familiars made by these medicinemen. But my attention has been drawn to an article by the late Revd. T. T. Webb published some years ago, 'The Making of a Marrngit,'[2] which contains some errors and misconceptions, and I have therefore extended the scope of this article to discuss the relationship of the medicineman and sorcerer in Arnhem Land and the roles and the distribution of these cults.

In the opening paragraph of this article Mr. Webb says: 'In east Arnhem Land there are two classes of magicians

[p.97(c)]

or medicine-men. Members of the one, whose operations are wholly of an evil character, are known as *ragalk*, while members of the other, whose operations are always of a benign character, are known as *marrngit*, or less frequently *gulang*.'

This statement needs qualification, for the cults of the medicineman or *marrngit* and the sorcerer or *kalka* in Arnhem Land are not quite as simple as suggested in this account, and the *marrngitmirri*—that is, the medicineman, the man who has been initiated and adopted by spirit familiars called *marrngit* who help him in the practice of his cult—really belongs to east Arnhem Land, and to the territory east of the Crocodile Islands, coinciding with the area that lacks a typical tribal organization. The somewhat different cult of the *ragalk* or *kalka*, the sorcerer, flourishes at Cape Stewart and to the south and west of this territory. Its stronghold is central and western Arnhem Land. Here, in the territory of the Burara tribe of Cape Stewart which lies immediately west of the Crocodile Group, and among Raimbar'ngo, Ritar'ngo and other tribes of central Arnhem Land, the cult of the *ragalk* flourishes. An informant of Wanguri clan who was linked by his totemic background with the Wallamango declared that the cult of the *marrngit* did occur in the neighbouring Burara tribe. But the account given by this man was not impartial and unavoidably gave to the *marrngit* of that area a kind of 'aura' of the *kalka* or sorcerer.

It will be clear from what I have said that the two cults are not complementary, except possibly in the Burara tribe. And in east Arnhem Land they certainly do not exist side by side as opposing cults among the same people, as the Revd. T. T. Webb's account implies. The sorcerer or *kalka*, although certainly known to the people east of the Crocodile Islands who live in the stronghold of the *marrngitmirri*, and much feared by them as part of the magical stock-in-trade of the *warnba*, the people of the west (strangers) does not exist as a cult in eastern Arnhem Land. The fear in which the sorcerer is held by these people resulted from the transfer of the Methodist Mission from Elcho Island, where it was first established, to Milingimbi in the Crocodile Islands—which, by coincidence, lies on the western fringe of the territory of the Burara, the very home of the *kalk*'.

The present paper is intended to give an account of the *marrngitmirri* and their *marrngit* and particularly to describe the way in which a man of east Arnhem Land is visited by his *marrngit* and initiated as a 'medicineman,' the relationship that exists between the *marrngitmirri* and his *marrngit* or spirit familiars, and the way in which his *marrngit* or spirit familiars test the medicineman before they adopt him.

The coloured plates (I, J) that accompany the paper, as I have stated, represent the *marrngit* drawn by three medicinemen of east Arnhem Land. The descriptions with the plates are translations of the information given to me by the medicinemen themselves, generally in their own languages.

The Kalka *and* Ragalk

After I had been working for about two years in eastern Arnhem Land and knew the language well enough to

754 speak and to hear most of what was said except when it was idiomatic or spoken very quickly, I made the following note: 'The cult of the *kalka* or *ragalk* properly belongs to the area of Arnhem Land extending from the Burara of Cape Stewart westwards. It did not exist as a cult to the east of this territory, although greatly feared by these people, but it was an important influence to the west as well as among the interior tribes, the Raimbar'ngo, the Ritar'ngo and others from the Derby Creek, lying south and west of Cape Stewart and the Liverpool River.'

And to this record, the following significant note was added: 'It was unknown to the Tjambarpoingo, the Kalbanuk and to most of the Mandjikai—the "sandfly people"—with the exception of the Wallamango, the latter a people of the Crocodile Islands who claim affinity with Mandjikai *barpuro*.' Wanguri clan is also linked with the same group. *Barpuro3* is a term that is difficult to define in the intricate and aberrant social grouping of this area.
617 It is applied in eastern Arnhem Land to loosely integrated clans often occupying discontinuous tracts of territory, geographically sometimes widely separated, but nevertheless having in common at least some vital and significant part of their total totemic heritage.

124 The immense complexity of this social grouping caused many lengthy digressions among informants and frequently interrupted the collection of long texts in the language to enable difficult points as to the bonds between groups to be clarified and the resultant effects upon the attitudes of
754 people made clear to me. Because the cult of the *ragalk* or
184 sorcerer was known to the Yanango of Mooroonga Island in the Crocodile Group—a clan of Maringo *malla*—who were on the borderline between the east and the west, with many cultural differences as well as differences in social organization, the impact of the *kalka* upon them was not as sudden or as destructive as it was upon the people of Elcho Island. My informants stressed the fact that the Ritar'ngo of the interior, who occupied a big area of country lying between the Liverpool River to the north and the Wilton (a tributary of the upper Roper) in the south, knew and practised the cult of the *kalka*, as did their neighbours the Raimbar'ngo.

It will be clear from the foregoing that the two cults,
[114] the cults of the *marrngit* and the *kalka*, are not generally complementary and do not, as Mr. Webb's account implies, occur together among the same people, with the possible exception of the Yanango and Wallamango and the neighbouring Burara. But the Yanango and Wallamango are marginal groups and this has an important influence upon their attitudes towards certain culture traits, and the emphasis placed upon differences tends to exaggerate these.

756 The more or less benevolent *marrngitmirri*, the typical medicineman, a kind of general practitioner, with his spirit familiars, is characteristic of the region east of the Crocodile Islands, extending to Cape Arnhem, where the cult of the
717 *ragalk* does not exist.
754 I have stated that prior to the transfer of the Mission
177 from Elcho Island west to the Crocodile Group, the people
184 of the Tjambarpoingo (*dua* moiety) and Kopapoingo-

[P.98 (B)]

797 speaking groups of Elcho Island, the Glyde and Goyder
754 Rivers on the west, and eastwards around Buckingham,
Arnhem and Melville Bays, to Cape Arnhem and Port
[177 Bradshaw and south to Caledon and Blue Mud Bays, had
184] little actual experience of the sinister cult of the *kalka*. But when the Methodist Mission moved from Elcho Island to the Crocodile Group and set up its headquarters at Milingimbi, an island lying a short distance off the coast, it brought the people who had accompanied the Mission into the very stronghold of a form of secret killing or sorcery that was strange to them. On this account they
609 came to regard the people of the west—whom they called
186 *warnba*, strangers—with fear and suspicion, and they have been more or less at loggerheads with them ever since,
[152] resulting in frequent blood feuds, and a considerable loss of life.

For years it was the practice of the natives who had moved from their own countries to the island of Milingimbi, into what was to them foreign and hostile territory, to discourage visits of the local people by acts of aggression and violence, depending on the Mission to protect them from reprisals.

797 Mr. Webb, who was in charge of the Methodist Mission
728 in the Crocodile Islands, once informed me, when I was at
722 Milingimbi during a brief respite from patrols on the mainland of Arnhem Land, that in the early days of the Mission there he had once, to maintain peace, bought all their fighting spears from the natives, but that when an attack from the mainland was reported to be imminent he had had to re-issue these—though in actual fact the attack
609 did not occur.
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As often occurs when a people are brought into contact with those of a different culture, the natives from the east tended to exaggerate traits of the Burara that they regarded
[520] as undesirable and often told me ribald stories stressing the misdeeds of their neighbours. After a long recital of the faults of the Burara, whom he stigmatized as *warnba*, one informant remarked by way of special emphasis, '*yappa lukka!*'—they cohabit with their sisters. The brother-sister
[835 tabu is rigidly enforced in east Arnhem Land. Even to
684] mention the name of a woman in the presence of her brother is a grave ritual offence, called *mirriri*, and brother-sister incest is a crime for which there is no expiation, punished by the death of both parties.

582 The charge of incest against the Burara may owe its
835 origin to the fact that these people, unlike their neighbours to the east, had a normal tribal organization, which meant that members of clans of opposite moieties within the tribe and of the appropriate kinship status could marry, since the tribe is not exogamous. Because people between
582 whom marriage was permitted were actually members of
835 the same tribe, the practice would suggest incest to their
152 neighbours of the east, already fearful of the magic of their
186 *kalka* and ready to attribute to these people practices that were to them anti-social and unnatural. This attitude of the Elcho Island people was well shown by the fact that they charged their neighbours with cannibalism and said of
[24] them '*nganak lukka*'—they eat flesh (human)—overlooking the fact that they themselves also practised a form of ritual

582 835 152 186 266 cannibalism which they regarded as indispensable to a hunter in order to maintain his prowess at a level that could earn for him the coveted title of *tjambait*.

123 During much of the time—amounting to several years—that I lived in Arnhem Land I hunted with groups of the status of horde, which often claimed one or more *marngitmirri*. I frequently saw these men practising their cult, and was able to make a detailed study of both *marngitmirri* and *kalka* while I lived a nomadic life with these people.

Kalka *and* Marngit

●754 The cult of the *ragalk* or *kalka—kalk'* of the Burara—, to which I have referred, is believed to be used to bring about the death of a man who has been made a scapegoat—frequently by a rite of augury—for the death of a member of an enemy horde. Often the victim will be a man against whom the deceased or his group have harboured a grievance of long standing, perhaps because he has failed to honour [688 some payment such as that obligatory to one who has been 689] present at a *ngarra*—or clan totem—ceremony, to make a ceremonial presentation of *ngata*, food (really vegetable food), or of *gerri*, goods, valuables, to the elders of this clan. Of this obligation they say 'to pay back that *marr*'—to [776 propitiate the *malli* of the culture hero whose totem is in- 782] volved. This *ngata* and the *gerri* presented by men who have attended the *ngarra* by invitation, are dedicated to the *wangarr* and are said to be *yarkomirri*, *i.e.* sacramental. Failure to discharge the obligation to make expiatory payments of the kind that I have mentioned places a man in danger of death by magic, even after a long period of time.

761 754 In Arnhem Land the belief is held that the death of any person in full possession of his social personality is due, not to what the white man terms 'natural causes' but to the act of an enemy, often a person who is believed to bear a grudge, real or imaginary, against the deceased. Even death from sickness or drowning, from attack by shark or crocodile, and especially from snake bite, is not regarded as the primary cause, but merely the agent used by an enemy, or by a *ragalk* whose aid he has enlisted, to bring this about. The only exception to the belief about natural death is extreme old age, when, in the words of one of my informants, the people say 'time belong him now'—his time is spent, he has lived his life. Certain types of swellings and deformities are believed to result from ritual visitation [638 or punishment by the *wangarr*, the totemic ancestors, for 776 the violation, even accidental or inadvertent, of a tabu, 784] particularly on the eating of foods which are prohibited at 753] certain critical stages in a man or woman's relation to his family or horde, as at initiation, on the death of near kin, or during pregnancy. Boils of a type distinguished as *mərlmə* are believed to be due to ritual punishment and so held as proof of the violation of a tabu, usually on the eating of food that is *duyu* (tabu) at critical stages in a man's life.

753 776 773 A man in east Arnhem Land named Nyarrang pointed to a large tumour on his neck and told me that it was due to the *malli birlma—i.e.* a blow from the 'shade' or spirit of an implement called *birlma*—used today as a mallet or hammer in food-preparation by women, and 'found'

[p.99(B)]

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776 originally by the Djangauwo sisters—women culture
[773] heroes, who, in their progress across east Arnhem Land, thrust their yam sticks into the ground as they walked. From each of the holes caused in this way there gushed a spring of water of a special kind called *milmindjark*. Certain tabus restrict the drinking of *milmindjark* water and my informant Nyarrang declared that the swelling on his neck was due to ritual punishment in the form of a blow from the *malli* of the heavy *birlma*, used by the Djangauwo sisters whose spirits still preside over *milmindjark* waters. Some time later, the effect of the blow from the *malli birlma* had become manifest in the form of a swelling. It is characteristic of these people that when 'something is wrong,' when they receive a warning in the
[787] form of an omen or portent, or when 'bad luck' attends their hunting or fishing expeditions, they look back over their lives for some incident which has caused them
[152] uneasiness or concern and which they feel may have incurred the displeasure of the *malli wangarr*, the spirits of the ancestral culture heroes.

756 The role of the *marngitmirri* is twofold: first, to diagnose sickness or to determine the cause of death, and secondly
[776] to find a scapegoat by the aid of his *marngit*—who, being
[787] spirits or ghosts, possess occult powers, powers to see things not visible to mortals, which they communicate to the *marngitmirri*, who in turn passes the information to the kin of the victim. As a rule the verdict of the *marngitmirri*
[682 is accepted without question and the people proceed to
593] select an avenger. This will be a person within the kinship horizon of the deceased—sometimes a younger brother but often a more distant relation from a clan to which, under an extension of the kinship structure, he has special obligations, which may be reciprocal.

In the marginal area adjacent to the Burara, *i.e.* close to the territorial stronghold of the *ragalk*—the *marngitmirri*
● [754] looks at once for signs of the tell-tale magic of the dreaded *kalka*, just as a man does when seeking the reason for what he accepts as ritual punishment.

754 Even in the culturally homogeneous area of north-east
756 Arnhem Land, the beliefs and ideas about the *marngit* and
114 *marngitmirri*, as well as about *ragalk*, vary considerably—necessarily so, in a matter which is strongly subjective. The foregoing reference to the role of the *marngitmirri* discounts Webb's statement (*loc. cit.*) that this man 'possesses no special influence in the life of his horde or tribe.' It must be apparent that at critical times, when the sentiments of the
[753 kin of a sick or newly deceased man are aroused as they
761] are by the pronouncements of the *marngitmirri* (which, backed by belief in his *marngit*, are accepted without question), his influence on the horde in which he lives is one of life and death.

The Kalka *at Work*

754 The *kalka* or sorcerer is believed to be responsible for
753 bringing about the sickness and ultimate death of his
761 victim but he does not profess to diagnose sickness or injury due to magic, which is the role only of the *marngit*. In practice, *kalka* may operate singly but more generally they work in groups of two or three. A sorcerer is likely

[p. 100(A)]

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761] to be named as a scapegoat by the *marngitmirri* of a neighbouring group when one of its members has died, and to be killed by an avenger who has been presented with a spear, to which is attached a bone, usually a metacarpal bone, taken from the finger of the deceased. One or more of these metacarpal bones are removed after the body has been disinterred. They are cleaned and decorated with the orange-red feathers of the red-collared lorikeet (*Trichoglossus rubritorques*), *lindiritj*. One of these *maidjaballa*, as they are called, is attached by a short string to the head of the spear and becomes an avenger's pennant. When a man is presented with a spear to which the *maidjaballa* is attached in this way, he is charged with the responsibility of killing the scapegoat. This is usually done by catching the victim off guard and spearing him. Sometimes this man may defer the action for a long enough time for the injured sentiments of the group to be appeased, when a potential blood feud may be averted by an expiatory payment or by a formal ordeal by spear.

[768
628] [761] In the practice of his cult the *kalka* is believed by the people of the east to waylay his victim in the bush when he is hunting or to invite him to go on a kangaroo hunt. Sometimes the *kalka* may induce his victim to accompany him by claiming to have already killed and cached a kangaroo—which was too heavy for him to carry back to camp alone.

Once he has succeeded in getting the victim away from his friends, the *kalka* has little difficulty in catching him off guard and overcoming him. Generally he will have made a rendezvous with other *kalka* in the bush. These men overpower their victim by knocking him down, then they open his mouth and pull down his lower lip to expose the alveolar border into which they insert the *kandjurma*—made from a long thin piece of ironwood called *maipin*, or from the long bones of a flying fox or the fibula of a kangaroo, sharpened to a fine point. Informants overlooked the fact that in this approach the *kandjurma* would strike the bone of the mandible or lower jaw. To the distal end of this *kandjurma* is attached a rope of human hair which is placed in a shallow trough of tea-tree bark called *tannia* in which the blood drained from the heart is said to be collected. The *kalka*, now aided by his confederates, has rendered his victim unconscious or comatose. As the *kandjurma* is inserted into the heart, which is approached by way of the dorsal aorta, the victim is said to emit a series of deep husky rasping intakes of breath. Each time this occurs the *kalka* pauses, but as soo as it ceases he thrusts the long, sharply pointed *kandjurma* a little farther down the great vessel towards the heart (*tortork*).[4]

The *kandjurma* is guided and shielded by the left hand of the *kalka* as he uses his right hand to thrust the point down to reach the heart.

Meanwhile one of the *kalka* places the *tannia* close to the victim. He now holds the man's head while the blood runs into it; the *kalka* then grasps his victim around the waist and squeezes his body so that all the blood is drained from it, after which he removes the *tannia* and hides it.

[224
784] The blood collected is made into small parcels wrapped in paper bark and either used in ritual cannibalism or rubbed

[p.100(B)]

on the eyes, cheeks and arm of a hunter to make him alert and far-seeing—*mel karrkuluk*—and so to aid him in sighting and approaching game that is difficult to kill, success with which brings prestige to a hunter. The blood drawn by a *ragalk* from his victim, or the flesh taken from the body of a man whose death has been brought about by a sorcerer, has special potency in magic. It is regarded as dangerous, *duya*—tabu in a ritual sense by virtue of its *marr*—*marr dal* (*marr*, spiritual power, *dal*, strong). It must therefore be eaten only with due observance of ritual precautions. In the case of a young man or uninitiated boy, human flesh, particularly flesh from the victim of a *kalka*, may be given to him only by an old man who first applies his own axillary sweat to the mouth, face and throat of the novice so that he will not become sick, and thus ensures that he receives the benefit of the *marr* without the danger that he would otherwise incur. On no account may a boy or a young man touch this flesh or blood with his own hands.

Meanwhile the victim of the *kalka* lies unconscious and is declared by the natives to be dead. They say that his *malli*—his ghost—remains with the body, but that his *birimbir* departs. The *birimbir* is very near to our idea of the soul. It resides originally with the *malli ranga*, the spirit or spirit-manifestation of the totem which remains always in the *wangarr kapu manotji*, the totemic well or water hole where it swam until it entered the mother's body at conception. When the *birimbir* leaves the body of the victim of the *kalka*, my informants said that it returned to the *kapu manotji*. And they added: 'All same he die.' It is as if the man has died. For when a man dies his *birimbir* returns as described above, to the *kapu manotji* from which it came and swims there until it is again reincarnated.

The *kalka* now proceeds to restore his victim to life. He takes a white stone from his dilly bag. First he rubs on the body the mucilage of an orchid called *djalkurk*, *Dendrobium dicuphum*, and then warms the stone, which he places on the sore—*tji'tji*—or on the victim's chest. He warms the stone again and now places it on the *maiyang* (throat) and chest. Then he draws the skin back into place, heats the stone again and places it on his victim's cheeks, supplementing the stone with the blade of his *mangal*—spear-thrower. My informants said that the penis of the victim is erect, the tongue hanging out and the bowel prolapsed, and each of these organs has to be treated and replaced in position. Sometimes one of the *kalka* will climb a nearby tree and break down the leafy nest of a green tree ant (*Œcophylla virescens*)—which exudes a strong, pungent odour of formic acid and is believed by the natives to have some therapeutic value. The *kalka* scatters these ants over the prolapsed intestine, which my informant declared to be effective in causing it to retract.

It was a matter of surprise to me to find a number of men who were in possession of the *kandjurma*, which are the stock-in-trade of the *ragalk*, admitted to membership of the cult, and were even willing to demonstrate to me their technique in dealing with a victim.

The natives do not pretend that a man subjected to treatment by *kalka* in the manner described is afterwards

754 unaware of what has happened to him, but they assert that because of their magic he is unable to tell of his experiences when he returns to camp, although he knows that he is doomed, and prepares to die.

After a more or less prolonged treatment to restore the victim and to cover external evidence of his work, particularly in obliterating the tracks to the place where the body lay, the *kalka* wraps leaves—any leaves—around the hook of the spear-thrower and waves it over the prostrate body of his victim, especially over his head. The victim stirs. My informant simulated the groans and grunts of a man awakening from a heavy sleep.

As he recovers consciousness, the victim thinks 'I have slept deeply.' He thinks 'I have slept too much.' Meanwhile the *ragalk* has hidden himself behind a tree.

'I think somebody has killed me,' *i.e.* worked magic. The *kalka* now springs out from behind the tree and frightens his victim, telling him that he is doomed and that he will die. The victim recognizes the *kalka* and threatens to kill him. He hooks his spear on his spear-thrower but he misses again and again. He has lost heart. He returns to camp, intending to tell his kin what has happened so that they can avenge him. The *kalka*, joined now by his confederates, waylays the victim, and again harries and intimidates him. The man returns to camp but is unable to tell what has happened to him. In two or three days he [152] falls sick. He feels cold and lies all the time close to a fire. He is resigned to his fate and calling his kin around him he says, 'I am going to finish' (I am going to die).

756 The people, who jump to conclusions, ready to see the *kalka*'s work, call on the *marrngitmirri* who holds him tightly, examining his body. He sees sores—the *malli* of the wounds made by the *kandjurma*—and he sees that the heart blood has been drained. If the *marrngitmirri* is not sure, not ready to accept responsibility for his diagnosis, he will call in others of his cult, or he will wait until [776] evening, when his *marrngit* return to him. These often leave the medicinemen during the day and return to them at night. The *marrngit* sit on his shoulders or in the *matji-tji* [415] (biting bag), a net basket made from strings and filled tightly with down feathers or with down (*ramman*). The *matji-tji* is slung around the neck and hangs down on the chest by a string. It is carried by men during formal ordeals called *makarratta*, and when fighting in single combat, when they put it in their mouths and clamp their teeth on it. *Matji-tji* are often worn by *marrngitmirri* and provide a place of refuge for their *marrngit*. The *marrngitmirri*, after initiation to the cult, is able to see his *marrngit* and talk to them. The people living in the same camp, although unable to see the *marrngit*, claim that they can hear the *kaindjarr*—the sound of swift motion—caused by their wings, or more accurately, since not all use wings as motive power, the sound of motion. The *marrngitmirri* [774 761] claim to be able to detect the work of *ragalk*, but not to heal their victims, because their heart blood has been [776 757] drained, the *birimbir* has departed and their internal organs injured or removed.

In the years that I lived with the natives in Arnhem Land I frequently saw the *marrngitmirri* at work. He claims

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victim will surely die. Hanging the reptile is part of the cure, and it is thus held hostage for the life of its victim. If the man recovers, the snake is released. It must not be killed even after the man's recovery, for if it were killed the victim would suffer a relapse and die.

Young Geitbapoi was bitten by a snake, and his mother saved his life by capturing the snake and hanging it in a tree. The snake appeared to be dying; the boy's condition also grew worse, and death was expected. But the snake passed a lot of what was said to be the boy's blood, and this was incontrovertible evidence of the reptile's recovery, and likewise its victim's. Therefore the snake was released, and in an hour or so the youth stood up and walked.

Power to kill by magic belongs to an evil witch-doctor known as a 'raggalk', who waylays the man and causes a deep sleep to fall on him so that he may squeeze blood out of his heart. Despite this, the victim lives an ordinary life till the raggalk decides to finish his work by sending a snake to bite him. As with ordinary snake-bite, the raggalk's victim tries to find the snake, to effect a recovery, but such a search is never successful, for the raggalk whisks away his instrument of death. For this reason, when a snake cannot be found after it has bitten someone, the injury it has inflicted is attributed to a raggalk. A marrnggit, or benevolent witch-doctor, can prove that a man has been bitten by a raggalk-snake by lighting a small smoke-fire, seating the man near it and blowing the smoke over him through a hollow pandanus palm-stem. In the curling smoke he sees the spirit of the raggalk emerging from the victim; he announces the name of the killer, and adds that nothing can save the life of the man.

Scorpions, stingray, and jellyfish are numerous, but their stings, though extremely painful, are seldom fatal. Scorpions attack women as they dig for yams among the stones on hillsides, and it is said that the groin or arm glands swell

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ABORIGINAL TEMPERAMENT

Men of the Reratjingo horde one day met two Kalpu youths with feigned friendliness, for both hordes shared the same totem and had other interests in common. But, unbeknown to the Kalpu youths, a Reratjingo man had recently died and his death had been attributed to Kalpu magic. Both parties sat on the beach, and most of the Reratjingo men drew away, with studied insouciance, ostensibly to hunt, leaving two of their number to entertain the Kalpu youths. A plan for revenge was then hatched by the Reratjingo, and as they came back, they signalled to their two accomplices to spear the Kalpu men. As they drove in their spears the others rushed in and completed the massacre. Mortally wounded, the Kalpu victims asked and were told why they had been attacked. They protested that they knew nothing of the death-by-magic, and bore no ill-will toward the dead man or his horde; whereupon the killers to a man expressed genuine sorrow and regret for the attack. They commiserated to such an extent that their victims implored them to end their misery, and they obligingly did so.

In the early days at Yirrkala some boys and their dogs went to fish at Melville Bay, twelve miles away, and in the evening when the dogs returned without the boys, a prolonged wailing and commotion broke out in the camp and fighting spears were produced and brandished. I asked what it was all about, and was told that because the dogs had come back alone it was surmised that the boys had been ambushed and speared. Fighting men were noisily preparing to go after the hypothetical enemy until I suggested that the dogs could have come back for something to eat, and that possibly the boys had camped at the bay. The men agreed to wait until morning, and then the boys came home! It is hard to say what would have happened if they had gone out at night searching for enemies, but at least this much is certain—they would have satiated their emotions by

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Black Magic

STONE AGE man's credulity and dark dubiety lead to the use of magic in everyday life. Specialized workers in evil magic are called 'raggalk', but astonishing powers are also credited to many men and women who claim to make wind and rain and to bring about the deaths of enemies. Aspiring raggalk are initiated by old witch-doctors, who do it for a consideration. The pupil is asked if he wishes to do a special killing or general training in all branches of black magic. When this nice distinction has been made the lesson proceeds.

A raggalk told me that both mentor and pupil search for an unsuspecting Yulengor, whom the raggalk kills with a spear-thrust between the ribs; he is killed in this particular way to simplify the draining of his blood. When the victim dies, the raggalk enlarges the wound and draws out the small intestines and buries them, meantime catching the blood in a bark container. Heart-blood is kept by the raggalk to assist him in hunting and to ensure health and good luck, and when he is making totemic emblems he swallows some of it to increase his skill. Such powers come from the lesser spirit of the victim, which is trapped in the blood and can be controlled by the raggalk. Eventually however the raggalk makes the fatal mistake of relying entirely on this ghost to warn him of danger, and when a killing-party comes to avenge the death of the victim, the ghost deserts him and joins the avengers.

Raggalk say that when the blood and organs have been removed, they wash and massage the body to arrest rigor-mortis and 'soften' it before bringing it back to life. To

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● 754 accomplish this a spear-thrower is heated and repeatedly thrust into the wound to 'draw' the flesh together. Meanwhile the killers wait quietly till the greater-spirit of the victim creeps back from the bush, and as it enters the wound they quickly shut it in with a sheet of bark and plug the body vents to prevent its escape. Soon afterwards the body begins to move, and this is the signal for the young raggalk to climb into a tree; whereupon the raggalk calls on the spirits of his departed ancestors to help him restore life to the dead, and the victim rises to his feet. Sitting by his fire, the raggalk casually greets his resurrected victim: 'Oh, you are awake? I saw something hit you, I think it was a hawk, and then you went to sleep. It may be still in the trees, you had better look for it.'

The victim is completely in the power of the raggalk, and when he looks in the trees and sees the young raggalk, he thinks he sees a hawk and asks for a spear to kill it. But the old raggalk warns him that it is a man and that if he kills it he will die. This by-play is the signal for the young raggalk to come out of the tree and change back into a man. As the victim sees him he tries in vain to speak, but raggalk-magic has twisted his tongue, and to prove their control over him they ask him if he recognizes them. He replies absurdly: 'Yes, you are a crocodile and you a kangaroo.' Having no control over his speech proves that the magic has worked and that he will die. Taunting him still further, the raggalk tell him to return to his camp and to say that they have arranged for his death by snakebite, or by a shark or crocodile. It is believed that the victim attempts to tell his friends but never does so, for his tongue independently speaks of anything but raggalk magic. Meanwhile the raggalk escape to their own hordes, and in a day or so the victim feels ill and dies in his camp, or by the appointed snake or shark.

[628] Raggalk are self-appointed; when an enemy dies, an aspiring raggalk will often claim to have killed him. At

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times an innocent tribal-enemy is accused of having become a raggalk to cause the death, and more often than not the accused openly admits the allegations, and though he be constantly pursued by the avengers he glories in his spurious notoriety. [754] [628]

Simpler magic known as 'borrpoiyuma' is brought to bear on a victim through his personal possessions, footprints, or excreta; anyone may practice the art without special training. A victim is spied on till he is seen to drop sweat, spittle, or urine, and his enemy lights a fire over the spot to heat the sand. The victim receives this heat in his abdomen and dies by slow torture. Should he realize that his trouble is due to evil magic he may counteract it by finding the fire and throwing water on it. In the case of ordure, the witch-doctor deposits it in a fire in a circle of stones, and a large flat stone and sand are packed on top to make an oven, which is left untouched for one or two moons. By that time the curse has worked and the victim has died in agony from pains in his stomach. [755]

A Blue Mud Bay nomad made a gift of armlets to a man from the Wessel Islands. Months after the gift had been made the Blue Mud Bay man developed sores on his arm and attributed them to the visitor's evil magic, and it was said that he caused them by throwing the armlets into a fire. In this instance the magic did not prove fatal, for the victim stemmed it by pursuing his 'enemy' and spearing him! Dilly-bags, pubic shields, or belts impregnated with sweat, are also means of contact between a witch-doctor and his prey. When a woman went blind for no apparent reason, it was surmised that her dilly-bag had been stolen and burnt. Her normal good health was evidence that magic had been used against her, but because she was a woman it was not worth while to search for the evil worker. [562]

Injuries may be inflicted by burning an enemy's waste

YULENGOR

●754 food in fire made from a certain shrub; as the heat increases his throat swells till he dies. The trouble can be cured only [755] by finding the fire and pouring water on it. If a spear or spear-thrower is broken and burnt, the owner's hands become crippled and twisted by rheumatism. A saccule or bark drinking-cup also provides means for injuring the one who drank from it, for if a pronged fish-spear is stabbed into it the victim's throat swells till he dies. Maleirpa the leper had lost most of his fingers and toes long before his misfortune was attributed to magic, but someone idly recalled that, years previously, Bulambi had followed Maleirpa's footprints along a beach and had aimlessly dropped the point of his pronged fish-spear into them. Obviously Maleirpa's toes had dropped off in consequence. As the victim did not die immediately, Bulambi was not [683] killed, but when the afflicted one finally succumbs, Bulambi will need to make restitution to his next-of-kin by the gift of a canoe, an axe, or spears. Meanwhile Bulambi, the leper, and his brothers fraternize and hunt happily together.

789 'Nyirrah' is specialized magic connected with the making
787 of wind and rain, the poisoning of food before it is eaten, and the controlling of a woman's desires so that she can be made to desert her husband and follow the man of Nyirrah. Such magic comes to a man in a dream, by instruction from another Yulengor or by direct bestowal from the Nyirrah spirit-centre. When the body is asleep human spirits are free to roam and converse, and then a spirit with Nyirrah powers [774] may invite another to see him kill a man or make rain. A [778] more direct method is to go inland to a mythical tree from which Nyirrah powers are dispensed. Approaching the tree the man hears the beating of clap-sticks, and their very invisibility proves that spirits inhabit the tree. If he is brave enough to go nearer Nyirrah will automatically come upon him.

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BLACK MAGIC

There are no direct methods for stopping a storm, and it is taken for granted that the rain continues as long as the rain-maker wills it. If fine weather is desired it is necessary to intimidate the rain-maker. During protracted stormy weather I developed acute appendicitis, and as the wireless transmitter had been shattered by lightning, we were unable to get medical assistance till five Yulengor, including Mau, volunteered to make a hazardous open-sea trip to the nearest pedal-wireless station one hundred and fifty miles away. Day after day the storms and high seas continued and the canoe was hardly expected to get through. From the time the boys left till the flying doctor arrived, Jirring, who was particularly attached to me, sat by his camp-fire significantly grinding his axe and muttering threats against the misguided rain-maker who had not only manufactured the storms, but now obstinately allowed them to continue.

Another kind of magic belongs to certain localities and it is necessary to perform certain rites at these magic-centres. An old gnarled tree in the Wessel Islands shelters the spirits of octopuses, and peculiar rock formations near Cotton Island are also octopus-spirit centres. If a nomad wishes to harm another he visits either site and instructs a spirit-octopus to enter the victim's body, in an invisible form, or to change into a fish which the victim will catch and eat to his destruction. Two men from Arnhem Bay were killed in the course of a long feud, so their mother went to an octopus centre and sent a spirit to spoil her enemies. She told the octopus-spirit to travel into enemy territory and there change into a large shell-back turtle, to float near the shore, and to remain inactive till caught and eaten: 'And when they eat you, you kill them,' she said. About that time the unfortunate enemy chanced to harpoon an outsize turtle near Port Bradshaw, and ate all they could, without paying attention to the poison glands. Within a few hours

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754 several women and children were dead; other sufferers were retching, and rolling on the beach in agony.

When an epidemic of whooping cough from Darwin swept eastwards through Arnhem Land and caused many deaths, [164] a horde on the Crocodile Islands explained that an enemy [776] had released the curse from a tree containing the spirit of the common cough. By stripping the bark from the tree he uncovered the evil spirit and sent it to the camps of his enemies to afflict them. On the other hand he could have broken up the tree, burnt it, and sent the smoke to blow over them.

754 Old Manimba, lame and half-blind, was familiar with 753 magical arts and an acknowledged rain-maker. He also 789 claimed to have control over mosquitoes and boils. Spirits 825 of both plagues inhabit the pandanus palm, and when these [776] prickly fronds drop off in the wet season the mosquito and boil spirits are released to swarm over the land. Manimba usually gets what he wants by threatening to send some sort of plague. To rouse unseasonal mosquitoes he pulls a green pandanus frond and instructs its mosquito-spirit to swarm into the country of his enemies, and it is done. He can call up boils by making a fire under the palm and directing the smoke to blow over and inflict certain camps.

754 Death in any but the very young or old is attributed to evil 761 magic and the first consideration is to fix the blame, for 787 someone must die for it. When a man is killed his lesser [775] spirit follows the killer. Marrngeit, or benevolent witch- [756] doctors, claim to be able to see these enslaved ghosts, and they are called on for an opinion. They sometimes make startling revelations to the relatives, though not always without serving their own ends. I remember one marrngeit acted on his own initiative, and asked the relatives: 'Do you know why your brother died?' And when interest and suspicion were fully aroused, he continued, 'I have seen his "mali". It is following Jimunboi, and he must

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have killed him.' At other times the marrngeit is called to examine the body and reconstruct the crime, for by his supernatural powers he can see the marks of the alleged wound, and by sleight of hand he pulls it open to prove his case. He can see the ghost of the killer lurking near the victim's body, or if the body has been disposed of he can still name the killer by an examination of the victim's armlet, spear, or footprints. 754 761 787

Birrinjauwoi of Milingimbi died from pleurisy and was buried before a marrngeit could be brought to examine him. His ornaments and personal possessions were therefore put aside for the autopsy, but when a trickle of moisture came from the lips of the corpse it was hailed as the best specimen of all and was taken to the marrngeit. This marrngeit was a wise man and talked to them and asked questions till he felt sure of their feelings, and then dramatically named the 'killer'.

A youth was killed somewhere in the hills behind Blue Mud Bay, and within three days we heard of it from messengers who ran with the news to us at Yirrkala. They called on the relatives to organize a revenge party, and personal possessions from the corpse were shown and small parts of his flesh distributed. In the emotion which flamed through the country, wailing women incited their men to vengeance. I was reminded of the biblical story of an ancient Hebrew tribe which received parts of a body that had been carved up and sent amongst them to cry for vengeance, and they swept over the hills of Palestine to exterminate a related horde. 628 765

Relics from a dead man are known as 'maiyabala', and consist of finger joints, small bones, fragments of the spear embedded in the body, dried blood, skin, flesh, hair, or ornaments. They are given to relatives as reminders of their obligation to exact blood vengeance and by the very acceptance of them the pact is sealed. A victim's lesser spirit 774 789 765

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765 horde had for the deceased. In decimated hordes, and in the case of aged and unwanted wives, I have known bodies to be left in the ground and no attempt made to remove them.

775 783 765 [302] Until bones have been collected and a mother is 'purified' she remains smeared with red-ochre and leads an inactive life. Relatives feed her and carry water from the well so that she will not desecrate it, for her child's ghost hovers near her and may attach itself to anything she handles. Similarly the relative who dismembers the body is tabu because of the ghost lodging in his skin, and he also is barred from waterholes and from feeding himself and becomes dependent on the hospitality of the family of the corpse. They are expected to treat him well even to the extent of [431] making presents in return for the favour he has done them in attending to the corpse and running the risk of absorbing the ghost. Consequently there is no difficulty in getting 'grandsons' to run these risks, and the father not infrequently declines several offers and even limits the number of morticians to two or three.

783 765 [264] This final purification ceremony is similar to the 'mumbakuta' described in Chapter 5. Food is deposited in a totemic well conveniently scooped in the sand, and from this a ceremonial meal is eaten by the victims of the tabu and by certain near relatives. Waste food is piled into the well and burnt, to prevent dingoes disturbing it, and the tabu is finally lifted and the ghost removed when the relatives heat leafy twigs in a fire and switch their bodies. Alternatively, water or sand may be poured over the 'unclean' as they stand in the totemic well and smear themselves with red-ochre.

761 ●754 All deaths are regarded with a certain amount of suspicion, but the death of an active warrior is always attributed to sorcery. In such case the body is left in the ground for a very 765 short time before the bones are collected. Smaller ones are [266]